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THE SPHERE, DECEMBER 28, 1940
With which is incorporated "BLACK & WHITE" 1/-

THE SPHERE

Vol. CLXIII No. 2136 WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE GRAPHIC DECEMBER 28 1940

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"DYKTAWO?"

the salesman enquired . . .

"It would be more suitable, Mr. Willett," my Aunt remarked, "if you spoke only English in these days."

"I'm sorry indeed, Miss Griggs," he replied. "DYKTAWO is neither code nor a foreign lingo. Just a little mnemonic of my own which, unfortunately, I have to use more and more frequently just now. DYKTAWO . . ."

"And it means — ?" queried my Aunt.

"Well," Mr. Willett replied, and he had the grace to blush, "Don't You Know There's A War On?"

My Aunt's self-control was superb.

"Why," she enquired of nobody in particular, "does every inefficient blame the war for his inefficiency? Mr. Willett, I have placed a simple order for goods: now, right on the verge of Christmas, you calmly tell me you cannot procure them. Pah! I should have tried the Stores in the first place."

"I can assure you, Miss Griggs, that we are not alone in finding difficulties over supplies. Thermos stuff is almost impossible to obtain — and I'm talking as one of their really good customers."

"Thanks mainly to me," my Aunt put in.

Mr. Willett bowed his acknowledgment. "Those were the days!" he reminisced dreamily. "Square-sided flasks for everybody, one Christmas. Then, the next year, those lovely jug sets. Another time it was picnic cases. But this year, when you wanted Thermos jars all round ——"

"This time," my Aunt interrupted, "you come unstuck. Mr. Willett, you must have known I'd want to give Thermos presents as usual for Christmas. Simple, sensible, suitable. And you go and let me down. Losing your grip, eh?"

Mr. Willett allows a generous licence to old and valued customers — even when they're wrong. "There's a very good explanation," he said mildly, "although it doesn't help much. The position is that, in spite of—er—circumstances to which I must not refer, the Thermos output has actually been increased. But almost the entire production is needed by the various branches of the Services, and to meet Government requirements."

"Well," said my Aunt, somewhat grudgingly, "it may be inconvenient for us, but at least Authority seems to be showing a bit of sense. With all these thousands of poor men standing about out of doors, there's an open-and-shut case for Thermos. Flasks, of course, but more particularly those big food jars."

"And that — as I'm told — is just what they are taking," said Mr. Willett. "Thousands of 'em, for—ah! but I must be discreet."

"That'll make a change," my Aunt remarked. And then suddenly she turned, almost entreating him. "Mr. Willett! I don't mind *what* you don't tell me — so long as you promise to let me know before anyone else when you can get Thermos jugs and jars again."

"Before anyone else," he smiled.

"Excellent!" cried my Aunt. "And really your suggestion that I should send everybody Savings Certificates this year, instead of the Thermos jars I can't get, was better than I guessed. It might help buy jars for the young fellows who drop the eggs on Hamm."

A faraway look came into Mr. Willett's eyes.

"I often wonder," he remarked, "what the Reichsmarshal has to say to the Yard Marshals there, when they show him the Yard in the morning. . . ."

My Aunt gathered up her parcels.

"Simple, Mr. Willett," she said with some relish. "DYKTAWO."

Issued with the Compliments and Regrets of Thermos (1925) Limited

THE SPHERE
With which is incorporated "THE GRAPHIC"
The Empire's Illustrated Weekly
London, December 28, 1940

THE RETURN OF THE SUBMARINE

Lieut. G. R. Colvin, R.N., of H.M. Submarine "Sunfish," and Two Bearded Members of His Crew, on Their Return Home from Norway

Every so often, after weeks of silence, a submarine slips quietly back into a British port and sidles alongside her parent ship after a protracted cruise to enemy waters. It is only then that the public hear of her successes during patrol. During her absence at sea the crew of the submarine find the rigid discipline of the Royal Navy greatly relaxed. Living so close to each other and in such a confined space, officers and men wear their warmest clothing, irrespective of appearance, allow their beards to grow because it is often impossible to shave, and otherwise conduct themselves as the unnatural conditions demand. Thus the crew of the *Sunfish*, which came home before Christmas from her operations close to the Norwegian coast. With her she brought back a report of the sinking of a German supply ship of 4,000 tons and of an attack on another German vessel—an oil tanker, also of 4,000 tons—which was hit and damaged. *Sunfish* is a member of a class which has already greatly distinguished itself in this war. Some of her sisters are *Swordfish*, *Sealion* and *Snapper*. She has a complement of forty

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A WAR NEWSLETTER —No. 69

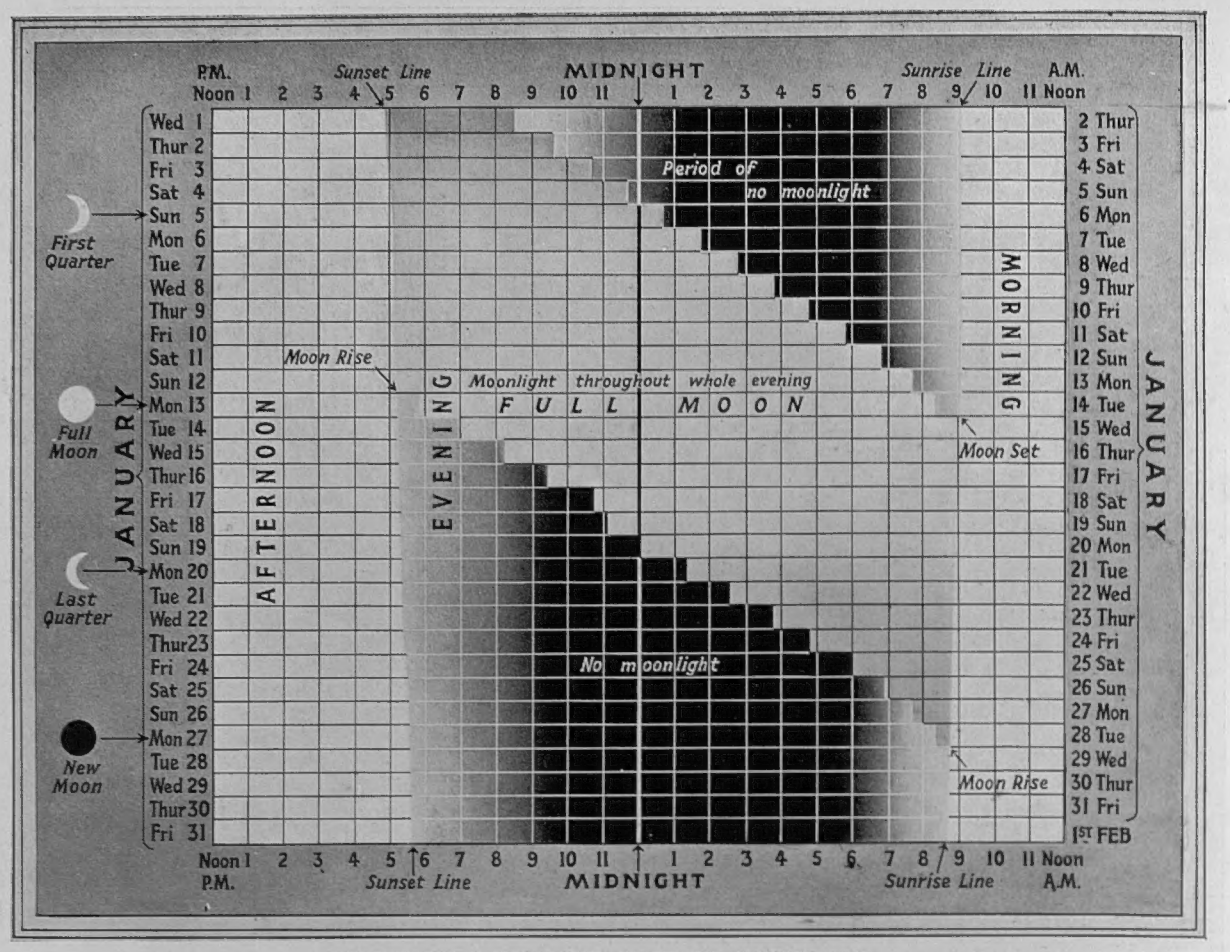
32-34, ST. BRIDE STREET, E.C.4.

THE GREATEST BLUFF ON RECORD.

—From the time of the Spanish Civil War, war by modern methods was widely condemned as the greatest instance of mass-madness. In considering all-time records, we may find an instance to-day of the greatest *bluff* on record. We find it in the façade of Fascism. Modern war has no greater weapon than propaganda. What has that weapon achieved to give substance to the empty façade of Fascism? The catcalls, threats and boasts of Mussolini, Gayda, Ansaldo and the rest of his jackals assured the world that Mussolini's Fascist Empire was a nation reborn, strong, even invincible on land, by sea and in the air, and in the new character of its people. In that belief, the world suffered the absorption of Abyssinia, of Albania. In that belief France ate dirt and grovelled to Mussolini's nation of heroes and conquerors. In that belief Britain sought by all means to appease Italy to the limit of self-abasement. In that belief we suffered Italy to occupy British Somaliland, though, as we know now, a stronger show of force would have melted the ice-cream of the attack. By sheer force of propaganda and bluff the façade of Fascism was credited with a strongly-built and fully-equipped building behind it. And what happened? At the first show of force, at the first rebuff, the whole fabric of Fascism revealed its rottenness. The invincible Fleet broke new records in *flight* and now lies half-submerged and wholly passive. The invincible Army melted away before the Allied assaults and left on the field its generals and its guns; and the invincible air fleet fell out of the skies, like farm pigeons under a hail of small shot, before the Allied airmen. And at home Fascism was revealed as a smouldering fire of bitter internal jealousies and contentions, kept under for years by the forcible efforts and smotherings of Blackshirt policemen. As for reborn Italy and the new qualities of the Italian race, those boasts also were moonshine. Mussolini "made the Italian trains go and reduced petty pilfering"—that is his best claim to fame in his heyday!

TRYING IT ON THE DOG.

—It is now possible coolly to estimate the extent of our glorious victory over Graziani's Libyan armies. The cruel Marshal was caught bending and his left flank was crumpled up and well-nigh exterminated. The captures in prisoners were positively embarrassing, a special zareba being required for general officers alone. The loot in war material was enormous and an irreplaceable loss to Italy and to her hopes of conquering Egypt. These important proofs of British military mastery over the Italians in the field are almost trivial when set beside other favourable evidences. The superb Staff-work, the proof that we have quickly learned valuable lessons from the German technique in the co-operation of air services with an advancing army, and have tried it out on the dog, Mussolini. The magnificent *élan* of our troops, the perfect co-ordination between Navy, Air Force and Army staffs; above all, the proof that in our struggle with the Axis, the initiative has been wrested from the enemy; and that now we are the attackers, they on the defence. The end of the year 1940 brings a transformation and an access of hope far beyond the wildest dreams of our optimists. The victory of Sidi Barrani is a complete episode, a complete hammer-blow, that needs no further exploitation to establish it as the major success it undoubtedly was. Counter-attacks and counter-successes cannot detract from its great importance and signal triumphs.



"THE SPHERE" MOONLIGHT CHART FOR JANUARY 1941

This diagram of the moonlight hours for the first month of the new year shows how the nights gradually shorten and the period of daylight correspondingly lengthens, the sunset time being retarded by nearly an hour by the end of the month. During the first few days the darkest period occurs after midnight. The first quarter makes its appearance on Sunday, the 5th, rising at about 5.10 p.m. and setting at about 12.40 a.m. on the 6th. The moon is at its full on the night of the 13th-14th, when it illuminates the sky for upwards of fourteen hours. It gradually diminishes in intensity, rising later each evening as the daylight hours lengthen and the month draws to its close with a lengthy period of no moonlight

A limited number of these charts will be supplied free of charge on application to the Publisher, "The Sphere," 32-34, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.4, but 2½d. in stamps must be enclosed with the application

FASCIST SEA-POWER.

—The Mediterranean Fleet has had its disappointments and, like Nelson's, has had need of patience with vigilance. But it has had its brilliant and heartening successes also, and to-day the Admiralty has no reason to be discontented with the progress made. The modern warship is not easily destroyed *in toto* and for ever. There are expensive but practical means of salvage and reconditioning whereby old ships and damaged ships can be made new. It is a signal triumph of sea warfare when a modern battleship is put out of commission for three months, and on this basis terrible execution has been levied on the Italian Fleet. If we consider its actual and potential strength at the beginning of 1940 and now, it is fair to say that it has lost in a year half its value as a fighting force, and if we throw in the appalling loss in morale to the Italian personnel, we may well put the percentage of wastage still higher. The Fascist Fleet has been chased and harried and smoked out of its holes like a rat. It has always hitherto evaded action, always turned and run when contact was made with the enemy, and now, with half its effective capital and heavy ships more or less seriously damaged, the morale of its officers and men shaken by failure to achieve a single success to set against half a dozen major knocks, it can find no haven of safety where it can lie up to refit and restore its shattered courage and reputation. We have every reason for satisfaction.

WHAT HAS IT GIVEN US?

—Is the stage set this dark and dreadful winter for that inexorable reaction to set in in Italy and Germany against dictatorship and the doctrines of force and totalitarianism? In Italy it may well be so, and that which begins in the weakest part of the Axis body will in time surely extend to the stronger. If the time be near in Italy, then indeed we have turned the corner. The position of Italy in two months has undergone a change for the worse too tremendous to be exaggerated. Cardinal diplomatic and strategic errors and recklessness have turned her leader from being an accepted prophet and statesman into a pantaloon. The great Colossus of a new Roman Empire is a deflated gas-bag. The man of destiny is the instrument of Italy's destruction and derision. What does the "Emperor" of Italy—a clever man, for all his physical and political insignificance—think of his diminished imperial crown and of the man who lightly set it on his head? What does the Crown Prince—who never marched with Mussolini? What do the Duce's Army and Navy and Air Force leaders think of the amateur strategist who called his own bluff about the invincibility of his armed forces by committing them to shameful or impossible courses of action? What do the rank and file, smarting under their shame and privations, think of their leader? And what do the people of Italy, above all, the softer, leisure-loving Southerners, most exposed to the rude blast of the northern winds of war? Their trade is at a standstill, imports barred, food growing scarcer; heat, light, colour, even hope, denied them. Their Nazi counterparts can at least recall still the glamour of victories, and perhaps the Italians do not yet know that Germans have debunked Hitler's victories and already ask themselves if Nazi defeats are not perhaps less devastatingly expensive to Germany. But for those poor Italians, there are not even hollow memories of hollow triumphs. They have been fooled all round. Fooled and despised from the beginning by their masters the Nazis; robbed of the price of their treachery, stripped of their pinchbeck reputation for reborn greatness, half-stripped already of their paper Empire, duped and brought down to misery and ridicule by the insanity of their leader. Will the winter, with its attendant sufferings, bring no reflections and reactions which may hurl this papier-mâché Colossus from his pedestal?

RUMANIA INFELIX.

Instances are not rare of the swift and appalling results to small nations of submitting to Nazi rule by force or through fear. Yet it seems to me that the most glaring object-lesson of all—Rumania—has not even now received a full measure of notice. Within a few days of "voluntary" acceptance of the Axis "world order," Rumania was plunged into a barbarism and chaos of disorder with which there are few parallels in the lurid history of the Balkans, and into an orgy of mass-murder which can only be compared to the worst days of Hitler's struggle for absolutism, or to the French or Russian revolutions. Until she accepted Nazi world order, Rumania's record for mass-murder was comparatively good among Balkan States; but the ink was hardly dry on her Axis pact before she had sunk to the nadir of barbarism, and out-Nazi-ed Nazism. Here were an object-lesson and poetic justice as significant and as terribly swift as the retribution which fell on Italy so soon after her hideous act of treachery and greed. The mills of God, which ground so slowly in the first year of war, have greatly increased their tempo, and humanity is once more aware of the watchfulness of Providence. Some pity may be reserved for this victim of Nazi world order. The mass of Rumanians no doubt in part deserve the government they now enjoy. For years they have been torn by local dissensions and petty preoccupations. But they are still a primitive race, set down in a hell's corner of Europe, the prey of their neighbours, a Naboth's vineyard whose confines have never been fixed with certainty for any length of time. It was no brilliant or daring prophecy which forecast in this "Newsletter" only a few months ago that Rumania's troubles, so far from being over, were only just beginning.

"THE NEW ORDER IN EUROPE."

—Arranged and produced by Hitler, the great impresario, with lyrics by Ribbentrop and Goebbels, and decor by the Iron Guard and Gestapo! It is hard to catalogue the production. It is not so much a farce or a harlequinade as a melodrama or travesty of a heavy tragedy; and the play-bill is printed in blood. Rumania to-day is in the vortex of disorder. The very leader who signed away her existence as a nation and enslaved her to the new order is giving his encouragement to a national movement to win back those territories of which he himself deprived her by an abject surrender. Who next, who now will join the Axis and enjoy peace and culture and quiet trading? There are worse visitations even than earthquakes, and Hitler is one of them."

THE OLD STAGER

PRE-CHRISTMAS SCENES IN ENGLAND

Where the Traditional Customs are Still Being Observed, Although Under Wartime Conditions

THE KING'S SYMPATHY FOR BOMB-WRACKED BRISTOL: During his tour of Bristol the King noticed a small group of people amidst the wreckage. He beckoned to them, and there among the ruins they told him of their ordeal during past nights

BOOKS FOR PATIENTS IN MILITARY HOSPITALS: There is at the moment a definite book shortage owing to paper restrictions; yet the demand for reading-matter in hospitals is greater than ever before. The Littlehampton branch of the Red Cross have therefore started a special centre for bookbinding and are rebinding old books sent in to them for distribution to Military Hospitals all over the country. They have already handled over 650 books in this way

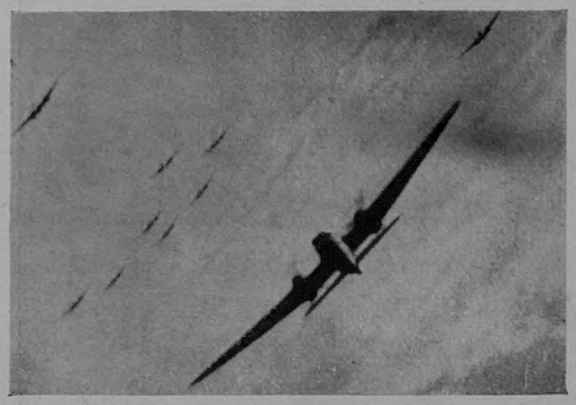
THE A.T.S. GOES SHOPPING—UNDER ESCORT: Those fortunate members of the Forces who have been lucky enough to get pre-Christmas leave have been doing quite an amount of shopping in the big London Stores

SANTA CLAUS TO THE CHILDREN OF KINGSTON: Regimental Sergeant-Major Wernham went to church on Sunday evening, and there heard the Vicar tell how the store of toys destined for the children at Dr. Barnardo's Homes at Kingston had been destroyed by bombs. When he returned to his camp and spread the news round the Regiment, every officer and man gave something. Later, Regimental-Sergeant-Major Wernham drove up to the Home with an Army truck packed with toys—and £70 in cash as well! Here he is seen with some of the children who benefited

BOMBED OUT BEFORE THE HOLIDAY: This group of nurses serve in a bombed London hospital: having got all their patients away, the nurses left just before Christmas for their new home and work in the country

BRITISH EIGHT-GUN FIGHTERS

A Remarkable Series of Pictures Taken Actually During Combat in the Air

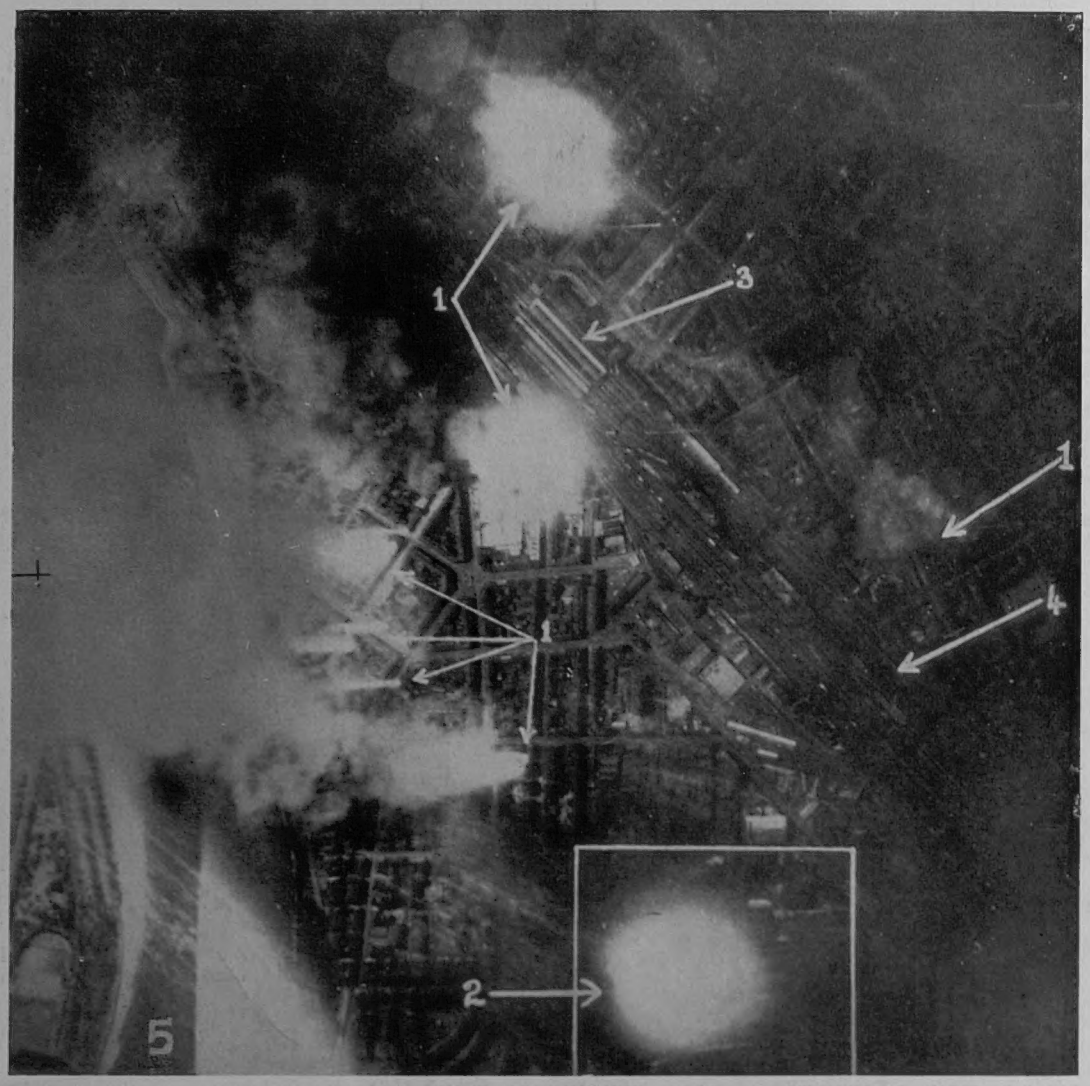


A FORMATION OF GERMAN HEINKEL III'S AS SEEN FROM A BRITISH PLANE IN HOT PURSUIT

A HEINKEL III ABOUT TO ENTER AN INTENSE FIELD OF FIRE, AS SHOWN BY THE "TRACER STREAKS"

HEINKEL III'S CAUGHT FULL IN A HAIL OF BULLETS FROM BRITISH EIGHT-GUN FIGHTERS

A HEINKEL III WITH SMOKE POURING FROM ONE ENGINE, AND THE OTHER ENGINE ALSO ON FIRE



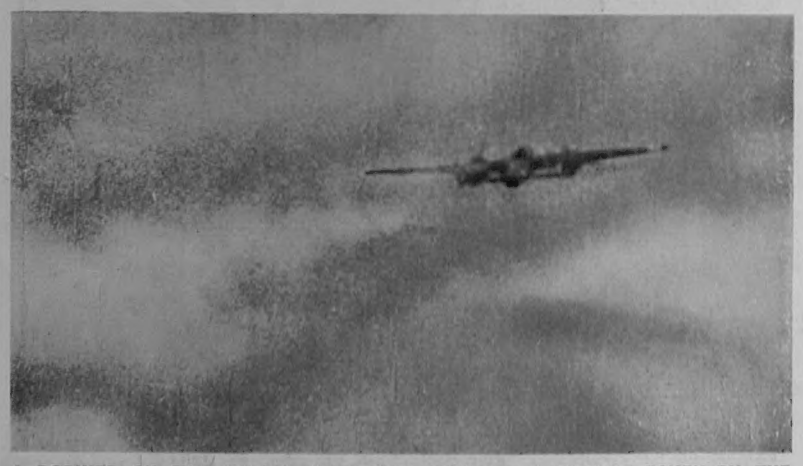
THE ATTACK ON MANNHEIM ON THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER 16-17: A REMARKABLE NIGHT PICTURE BY THE R.A.F., TAKEN WITH THE NEW PHOTOGRAPHIC FLARE-BOMB

Three nights after the great raid on Mannheim, on December 16-17, by the R.A.F., the Air Ministry released this remarkable picture, taken, it is believed, with the wonderful new flare-bomb. These are dropped with the other bombs, but burst in mid-air above the target, lighting it up just as the big bombs explode. Cameras in the planes above then take their pictures automatically. The first aircraft to arrive had started fires and caused a direct hit on a factory making armament components. A heavy attack was then made on the main railway station, goods yards and industrial buildings on the right bank of the Rhine. Successive waves of bombers came over the same objectives from just before eight o'clock in the evening until the early hours of the morning, and the attacks continued during this long period with scarcely a moment's respite. Thousands of incendiaries fell on this single area as well as an exceptionally large number of heavy high-explosive bombs. **1.** *North*: Fires burning fiercely north and south of the Haupt Bahnhof. **1.** *South*: Fires in the Lindonhof district. **1.** *East*: Fire near marshalling yard, which can be clearly seen in the centre of the photograph. **2.** Large fire burning strongly in the Heinrich Lanz Works. **3.** The Haupt Bahnhof (Central Railway Station). **4.** Marshalling yard. **5.** River Rhine

EIGHT-GUN FIGHTERS IN ACTION

The series of six smaller pictures reproduced on this page are official Air Ministry records of actual combat in the skies: they were taken by the wonderful camera-gun now fitted to our Hurricanes and Spitfires. These cameras, loaded with 16-mm. film, are fitted in the wings alongside the guns: they automatically register a record as the pilot puts his guns into action; when the firing ceases the pictures cease. Every time a picture is taken, therefore, the fighter is actually firing at an enemy aircraft. If the records sometimes lack clarity, due to cloud condensation on the lens, vibration, and fumes from the exhaust of aircraft, they nevertheless provide certain evidence of the concentrated fire-power brought to bear by an eight-gun British fighter. This fire-power is greater than that of the entire machine-gun strength of a 1914 Brigade of Infantry! These pictures have been enlarged from film records of several recent combats

A DORNIER BEING HEAVILY ATTACKED: NOTE THE DARK OBJECT ON THE LEFT—THIS IS ONE OF THE CREW IN THE ACT OF BALING OUT



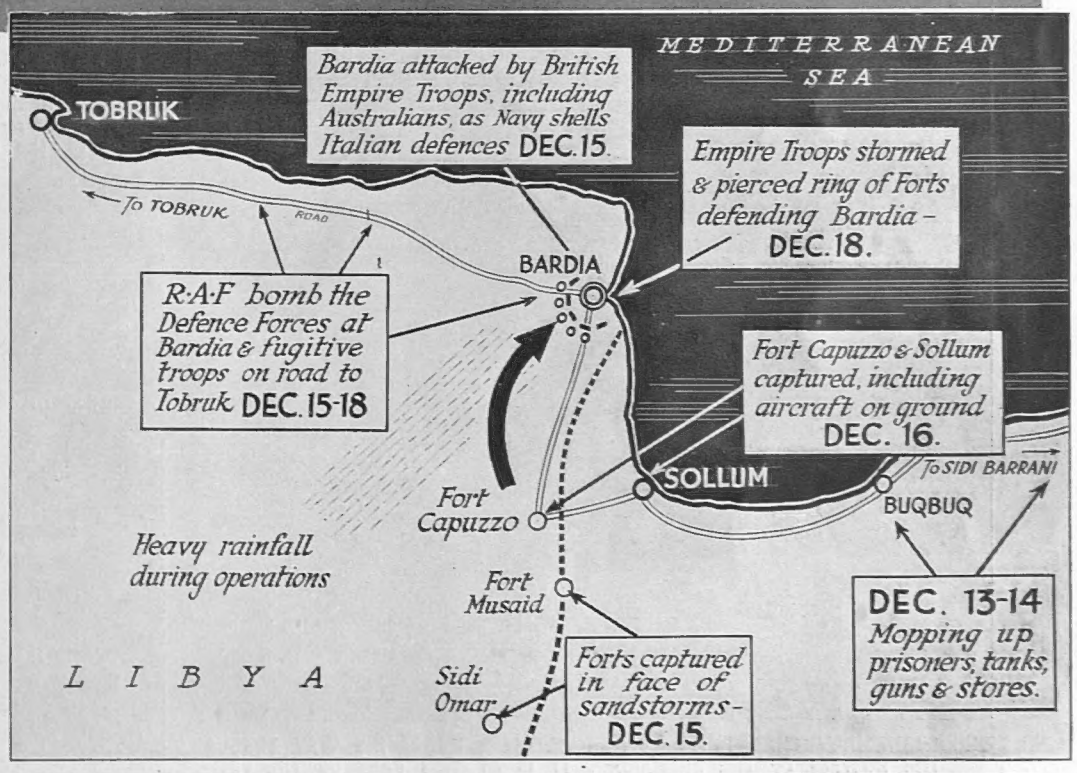
A DORNIER ON FIRE DURING AN AERIAL COMBAT: A PICTURE TAKEN BY THE ATTACKING BRITISH AIRCRAFT

THE ROUT OF THE ITALIANS

The Pursuit into Libya and the Attack on Bardia

AN IMPERIAL AFFAIR — NEW ZEALAND INFANTRY MARCHING THROUGH THE CHOKING SAND OF THE LIBYAN DESERT : The men have marched when occasion demanded it, but the main spearhead of the pursuit has been conducted with motorised vehicles conveying guns and men hot on the trail

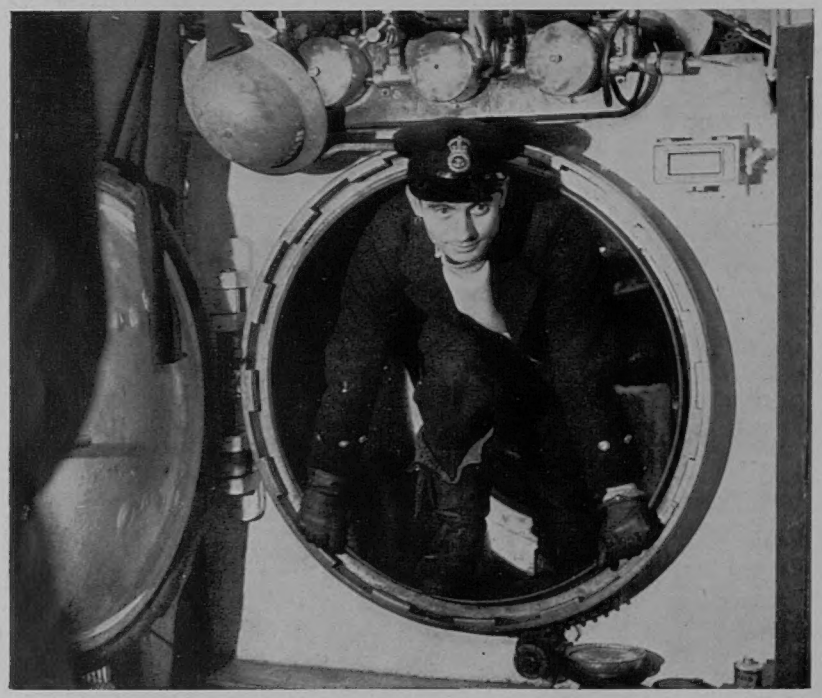
THE PRESSING NECESSITY OF WATER FOR THE TROOPS—SAPPERS FOLLOW AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE : Pneumatic drills were being used by the sappers in their efforts to get down as rapidly as possible to some underground water. *On right*—The map shows how the pursuit went on from the 13th to the 18th towards Bardia. In the area round Buqbuq a certain small body of troops was clearing up the immediate battlefield



RUSHED TO THE SPOT IN ARMY LORRIES, TROOPS DROP TO THE DESERT LEVEL AND TAKE COVER : This view of troops descending from motor-lorries during the development of the attack upon the Italian positions on the plateau illustrates a procedure which was taking place all along the Allied line. Without motorised transport, the long turning movements could not have been carried out. These troops are members of the Free French Army—they have taken an active part in the attack and pursuit of General Graziani's Army of Invasion

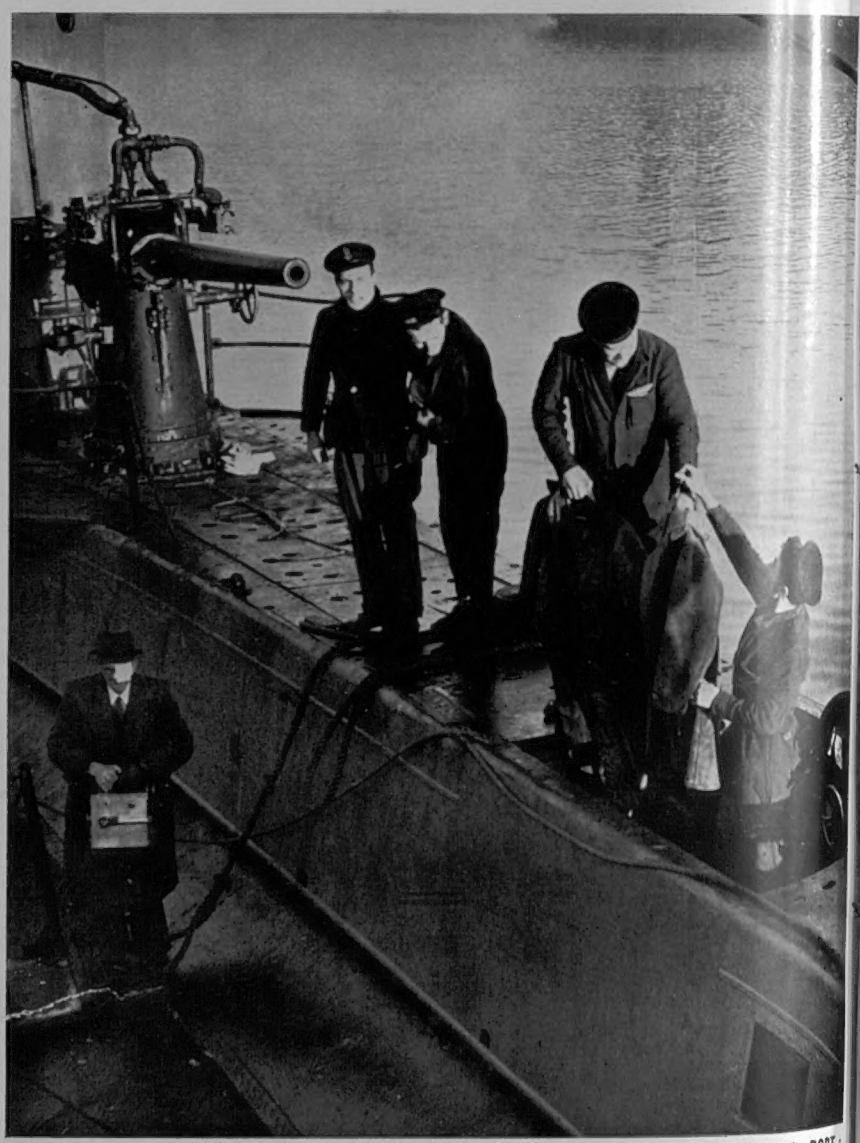
WITH THE ROYAL NAVY AT SEA

ON BOARD A SUBMARINE—THE DAILY TOT OF RUM BEING SERVED : Every inch of space is utilised, and when the table is finished with, that, too, disappears, to allow just a little more space, for movement within the hull of the submarine is very confined



THE SUBMARINE'S CHIEF PETTY OFFICER ARTIFICER MAKES HIS WAY THROUGH THE BOWELS OF THE SUBMARINE. IT IS AT THIS PART OF THE VESSEL THAT THE DAVIS ESCAPE APPARATUS IS STORED

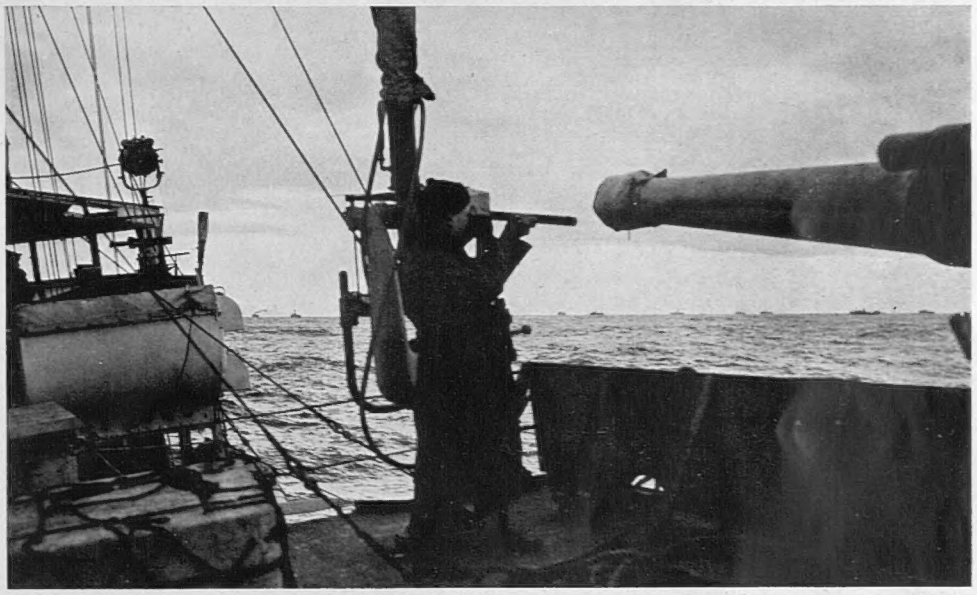
LIVING-SPACE IN AN UNDER-WATER VESSEL IS NATURALLY CONFINED : THIS OFFICER MANAGES TO SECURE A LITTLE COMFORT WHEN OFF DUTY



OUT COME THE SHORE-GOING CLOTHES WHEN THE SUBMARINE RETURNS TO PORT : Not the least part of our incomparable Navy is the Submarine Fleet. There are many, indeed, who regard the submarine crews as the bravest men of all. Only the younger men are selected for this hazardous duty ; and once they leave their base they are cut off for weeks on end without any contact with shore. These pictures were taken at one of our submarine bases, and give some slight idea of the conditions under which the crews live

ON CONVOY IN WINTER-TIME: HEAVY GOING IN A ROUGH SEA AS THE CONVOY FORGES AHEAD

OFFICERS OF THE CONVOY KEEP A KEEN LOOK-OUT FROM THE BRIDGE: The two pictures reproduced here were taken on board an escort ship accompanying a convoy bringing food to Britain through dangerous seas and beneath dangerous skies



ON AN EX-U.S. DESTROYER—THE WARSHIP TAKES UP HER ALLOTTED POSITION WITH THE CONVOY. THE LOOK-OUT MAN IS SEARCHING FOR POSSIBLE U-BOATS AND MINES

ON AN EX-U.S. DESTROYER: FILLING THE CARTRIDGE DRUMS FOR THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS—A GREASY JOB

The ex-American destroyers, like the *Abel P. Upshur*, are already favourites with British destroyer men. They combine with the liberty and disciplined freedom of destroyer-life comforts generally associated with a battleship. The *Abel P. Upshur*, laid down twenty-five years ago in a U.S. shipyard, has spacious mess-decks, bunks in place of hammocks, libraries for the crew and officers, electric hot-plates in the officers' galley, hot-water radiators, hot showers, roomy and comfortable officers' cabins—in short, they are a dream of comfort! The destroyer carries triple torpedo-mountings and four 4-in. guns. Unlike the armaments of British-built destroyers, each shell has its own container, secured in special racks at the guns. There are also modern-type anti-aircraft weapons. These former U.S. destroyers are now captained by veteran British commanders experienced in U-boat destruction

A SHIP'S CONFERENCE IN THE DESTROYER: From left to right are the First Lieutenant, Lieut. Commander, Engineer Officer and Navigator: they are discussing convoy instructions, the course to be set, signals, and other matters in the wardroom before leaving port with the convoy. The Engineer Officer jots down notes of oil consumption and engine speeds; the Navigator must be able to state the exact position of the ship at any time during the arduous voyage which lies ahead; and the Commander must get the ships through!

THE CAPTURE OF FORT GALLABAT : Newly-arrived Pictures of the Operations in Italian East Africa

A CAMEL PATROL OF THE SUDAN DEFENCE FORCE ON THE ERITREAN FRONTIER : The fighting on the Sudan frontier goes steadily on, a small post of the enemy being picked off here or driven back there, and apart from the hollow victory in obtaining possession of British Somaliland, the enemy has not been heartened for a long period extending into months, by any victorious action

BRITISH ARTILLERY IN ACTION DURING THE RECAPTURE OF FORT GALLABAT : The first decisive action on the Abyssinian frontier, it will be recalled, was at Kassala, brilliantly retaken by a small force; the next was at Gallabat. On Wednesday, November 6, a British force advanced with tanks, armoured cars and artillery and caught the garrison force entirely by surprise

ITALIAN GUNS CAPTURED WHEN GALLABAT WAS REOCCUPIED: The Italian forces were under the impression that the British had no guns or mechanised units south of Khartoum. They were undeceived when Gallabat was retaken, with a very useful display of tanks and artillery. These two captured guns look very modest affairs

THE LITTLE FORT AT GALLABAT AROUND WHICH THE ACTION MOVED : The Italian love of building small forts in their African territories doubtless made them strengthen Gallabat, but whatever was there did not on the first day put up more than an hour's resistance. The action ebbed and flowed for two days (*see illustration on left*), and finally the British sat down to breakfast on Sunday morning, November 10, within the captured fort, the Italian force having retired to the east

GUARDING THE EMPIRE'S LIFE-LINES: *Bringing us food, arms and raw materials across the oceans of the world, another Convoy approaches the shores of Britain. An escorting destroyer has successfully kept the enemy at bay during the long voyage*

FIGHTING the MENACE of the SUBMARINES

The Danger to Our Merchant Convoys—and the Work Behind the Scenes in the Royal Navy

Described by FRANK C. BOWEN

VERY seldom have any warships, except the very latest and the biggest, obtained the public attention which has been devoted to the United States destroyers transferred to Britain, yet they only form a very small part of the Navy's anti-submarine weapon which is known to the public, and the public only knows a very small part of the weapon as a whole. The greater part of it has been forged and maintained against discouraging apathy and very often false economy; the fact that it has been done so well must stand to the lasting credit of that part of the Navy which is seldom noticed outside Service circles.

Before the outbreak of the late war, the Navy paid some attention to countering the submarine menace, but the German U-boat fleet was not taken seriously, and the ideas were somewhat primitive. It is true that the British Navy never took things as lightly as the Russian command at Port Arthur, which, when it learned that the Japanese had acquired submarines from the United States, gave orders that when one was sighted, a boat should pull up to it as silently as possible, and the bowman should put his cap over the top of the periscope, thus blinding it. But the methods suggested were primitive: spar-torpedoes in destroyers, similar to those used during the American Civil War, and wire sweeps towed between gunboats. Such flag-officers as Sir Doveton Sturdee, the victor of the Falklands, and Sir Reginald Tupper, of 10th Cruiser Squadron fame, did a lot of research work, and did their utmost to get the possibilities of anti-submarine defence taken seriously, but they had an uphill job.

The old submarines *A*.1 and *A*.2 were used to test the effect of gun-cotton explosions below water, but it was the invention of the depth-charge which made all the difference, and encouraged the Service to believe that the danger was not beyond countering. It was an accountant officer, Paymaster C. T. Buckell, who first suggested the idea of a depth-charge, in primitive form, to the Admiralty, but the congestion at the newly organised munition works caused the idea to be held up. A few weeks later, Captain P. H. Colomb submitted a design worked by a hydrostatic valve, which was operated at the desired depth by water-pressure, and Admiral Sir Charles Madden put up a similar scheme. Admiral Sir Percy Scott, in his reminiscences, complains that, although he was head of the Anti-Submarine Section, he was told nothing about these ideas having been put forward, but he himself proposed a somewhat similar charge. According to him, the Admiralty tried to improve on these ideas, with the result that the Fleet was not supplied until half-way through the war. Experiments were carried out by the Vernon Torpedo School at Portsmouth, and scientists in Manchester University, but progress was slow, and in the early days the only form supplied was the submarine dart and lance-bomb, which were liable to do more harm to the attacker than the submarine attacked.

Finally, 60-lb. depth-charges were made and supplied, with surprisingly good results, so that they were developed to 200 lb., 300 lb., and, by the end of the war, 600 lb. German U-boat men dreaded them from their earliest use, and they were steadily improved both before and after the Armistice.

The Anti-Submarine Committee which had been formed in 1910, and whose experiments have been mentioned, was the first definite Admiralty move to tackle the problem; but although they discovered a good deal, they had to fight apathy. In 1913, Admiral Sir Percy Scott attempted to secure improvements by propaganda, both inside and outside the Service, but, to begin with, the result was only fierce controversy, as it usually was when Scott put forward his ideas in his own fashion. By November 1914, when the Germans had already scored their first sensational submarine successes, Scott was instructed to take active measures. One of the earliest of these was the fitting of hardened steel rams to destroyers and other patrol craft. The need for a controlling department in the Admiralty, with sufficient weight to make its views heard and to secure supplies, was not appreciated until the end of 1916. Until then, anti-submarine operations were controlled by the Operations Division, which already had its hands very full with other matters, and experimental work was limited to the efforts of four officers. Shortly before the late Lord Jellicoe left the Grand Fleet, he very strongly recommended that a special Anti-Submarine Division, under a flag-officer of standing, should be established in the Admiralty, and this was done before the end of the year, taking over the control of all anti-submarine operations from the Operations Division, and examining and perfecting anti-submarine devices. It began with Rear-Admiral A. L. Duff, assisted by two captains, four commanders, three lieutenant-commanders, and two engineer officers, the existing anti-submarine experimental staff of four being absorbed and the necessary clerical staff being collected. They suffered severely from amateur enthusiasm, ranging from Cabinet Ministers, who were offended when totally impracticable suggestions were turned down, to hundreds of landsmen, who sent in such proposals as filling the North Sea with Eno's Fruit Salts, and thus forcing all submarines to the surface to be dealt with by destroyers and patrol craft.

It must not be thought that all the ideas brought to the Admiralty from outside the Service were useless. Many of them were of the greatest value, especially those which had been worked out by practical engineers, and by the staffs of the firms engaged on naval shipbuilding and armaments work.

As in the present war, the Admiralty maintained a very wise policy of the greatest secrecy with regard to its operations against submarines and the successes that it scored, so that it was not until the censorship was raised after the Armistice that the general public had the opportunity of learning what splendid work had been done. Grossly exaggerated reports of the number of submarines sunk, and the methods employed, naturally led to scepticism, but that could not be avoided, and many of our methods, and the success that they scored, were not known to the German Admiralty until well after the war, with the result that U-boat after U-boat fell into the same trap.

Naturally, these measures demanded careful training, and gradually the Anti-Submarine School

(*Continued on following page*)

ON BOARD THE DESTROYER ESCORT: Seated on a group of depth-charges, the bearded sailor calmly smokes his pipe and reads his novel

PREPARING THE DEADLY DEPTH-CHARGES: Torpedo men on board a British war vessel putting in the depth-settings on the depth-charges, ready for instant action

A BRITISH CONVOY PASSES THROUGH THE DOVER STRAITS BY NIGHT—*Drawing by Montague Dawson*

The scene depicted above took place a short while ago in the Straits of Dover. A British convoy was making its way by night through the Channel ; it was under escort by naval vessels and was equipped with its own balloon barrage. As it slipped into the Straits under cover of darkness and sea mist, the German guns on Cape Gris Nez opened fire. The Kent coast was shaken by the thunder of the gunfire and the bursting flashes lit up miles of French and English coastline. Our guns soon engaged the German batteries, plastering their emplacements with a heavy curtain of shells to screen the passage of the convoy. Shelling ceased at ten o'clock ; the convoy was then far out of range

(*Continued from preceding page*)

at Portland grew out of the Hydrophone School, while other training establishments were started for special weapons and craft. The work was greatly assisted by the rapid output of depth-charges, which had come to be recognised as the finest weapon against submarines. In July 1917, the munition works could only turn out about 140 per week, but by the end of the year the output was 800 per week, and still rising. Ships using depth-charges are bound to work in the dark, and a number of U-boats which escaped the first one or two, with only slight damage, were finished by a subsequent fusillade when destroyers were carrying up to 30 and 40 depth-charges apiece.

For all the Navy's efforts, merchant ships had to depend largely on their own self-defensive work, and from February 1917 onwards, overworked naval officers undertook the training of masters and mates of merchant ships at various convenient centres. To begin with, these courses were entirely voluntary, but they were so successful, and the merchant seamen were so keen to learn everything they could, that they were very greatly extended, and finally made compulsory, officers and cadets learning the principles of anti-submarine work, and seamen being given a good groundwork in defensive gunnery.

By the end of the war, exclusive of the ships supplied by the Dominions, the Navy had nearly 350 destroyers, 215 sloops and mine-layers, 54 gunboats, nearly 90 torpedo-boats, over 60 patrol-vessels, and over 300 trawlers and whalers, all of whose principal work was the hunting of submarines. In addition there were armed yachts, motor-boats, drifters, and other small craft ; the United States Navy had supplied destroyers, submarine-chasers, auxiliary yachts, and the like ; and France and Italy also possessed anti-submarine craft in very considerable numbers, although the most aggressive work fell to the lot of the British and American Fleets.

Immediately after the Armistice, the comforting thought that the war had ended war, and that there would never be another submarine campaign against commerce, led to the minor types being drastically reduced, going to the scrappers in scores, while the Anti-Submarine Division was one of the first to disappear from the Admiralty under the economy axe, its functions being split up among various branches of the Navy, and the only section which retained its existence being that relating to under-water detection, which was handed over to the Portland Anti-Submarine School. This was happily retained under a captain, but its personnel was drastically reduced, and it had the greatest difficulty in carrying on

THE HUGE AIRCRAFT WHICH ARE PROMINENT IN THE TASK OF GUARDING THE CONVOYS

The Sunderland flying-boats of the Coastal Command have contributed largely to the success of the convoy system in this war : numbers of them have been manned by officers and men of the Royal Australian Air Force Squadron, who have flown many thousands of miles on this arduous duty. Their job, which they do day after day, is to sweep the Atlantic for enemy submarines and warships, convoy incoming and outgoing merchantmen and, if occasion arises, shoot down any enemy aircraft that attempts to interfere with our freedom of the seas. These huge Sunderlands are veritable "Dreadnoughts of the Air" : each has four engines, a range of approximately 2,000 miles, and a maximum speed of 210 m.p.h. Their armament includes multiple gun-turrets fore and aft, and two further gun positions amidships, on the top of the fuselage. The fire-control officer is usually stationed in the "Astral Hatch" : on sighting an enemy aircraft he directs the machine-gunners by the inter-communication telephone, whilst the navigator continues with his course-plotting and the pilot carries on with his duties fully conscious that every member of the crew knows his job and will carry on with it faithfully and well

JOURNEY'S END—THE CONVOY COMES HOME—*Drawing by W. MacDowell.* The convoy is in sight of British shores, and a coast-patrol vessel

FIGHTING the MENACE of the SUBMARINES—*(Continued)*

its work in face of the official demand for every economy.

At the beginning of 1927 the importance of the School was more fully realised, and it was reorganised with a special civilian scientific staff, drawn from the Scientific Research Department and other places, in addition to its naval personnel. All the shore hydrophone stations had been dismantled, and masses of excellent gear had gone to the scrap-merchants, but the Admiralty had made the Submarine Detector Branch a separate section in the Fleet, equivalent to the Gunnery and Torpedo Branches, and had attracted some of the best men in the lower deck to specialise in it. All the higher scientific ranks were cramped by economy, but they continued to do excellent research work, and one of the many appliances which they evolved was the famous Asdic gear, which was first mentioned by Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons in December last year, and which is believed to have led to the detection and destruction of a large number of German and Italian submarines since September 1939. Naturally, its details are kept very secret, although the Germans may have got hold of them with the surrender of the French Fleet, and this atmosphere of secrecy produced all sorts of public guesses as to the secret meaning of its name, which was merely the initial letters of the Anti-Submarine Detection Indicator Committee.

The staff machine behind the anti-submarine service was naturally one of the first to receive careful attention when the Nazi menace was finally recognised, and Britain started her rearmament programme. The Portsmouth School, which included an experimental department, received some of the most brilliant officers of the Navy, and it had quite a fleet of submarines, escort vessels, destroyers, trawlers, and the like.

The result was seen when Germany, with all the elements of surprise in her favour, launched her submarine campaign with the destruction of the *Athenia*. Their staff had calculated on 2,000,000 tons of peaceful shipping, not yet armed for its own defence, being sunk in the first month of the *Blitzkrieg*, but actually this figure was not reached until the war had been in progress for ten months. On the other hand, German submarine losses had been very much heavier than was anticipated, although the Admiralty refused to publish details, and there is no doubt that the Berlin Admiralty Staff had been reckoning on having to meet our methods as practised at the end of 1918. They had, however, been vastly improved, and gave an unexpected shock.

THE NAVIGATOR AT WORK IN A SHORT SUNDERLAND FLYING-BOAT

Busy with his charts and instruments, plotting the next change of course, the navigator carries on with his job even if an enemy aircraft is being engaged. These huge aircraft, since the outbreak of war, have assumed the great responsibility of escorting the convoys to and from Britain; flown largely by Australians, they have performed a very valuable task indeed

sends off a boat with instructions for the homeward-bound merchantmen, and perhaps greetings. But though the convoy's voyage is nearly finished, vigilance is in no way relaxed, for an enemy submarine may be lurking off the home port awaiting just this opportunity. The escort cruiser does not stop, but slows down a little for the motor boat to come alongside. Overhead a squadron of fighter planes of the R.A.F. on patrol pass on their way

CHRISTMAS AT SEA

How the Yuletide Festivities are Celebrated on Board Every Ship Wearing the White Ensign.

By "WINDLASS"

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, I spent my first Christmas on board one of his Majesty's ships of war. It was the second Christmas of the first so-called Great War, and well do I remember it.

The Royal Navy is conservative and clings fiercely to its age-old traditions and customs, departing as little as possible from ancient usage even under the stress of war. And so it was that a very young midshipman, coming on deck for the first time on that chilly morning (the ship was lying in the Firth of Forth) was astonished to see the ships decorated in the traditional Christmas way.

In the cold darkness preceding the grey dawn of the northern winter day, long before the first eager childish fingers had explored the exciting depths of Christmas stockings, seamen had clambered aloft and made their dizzy way along high yards and spurs. The first pale morning light broke on mastheads capped with Christmas trees and yard-arms garlanded with holly and evergreens. Even the trucks of ensign and jack staffs were decorated with small bunches of mistletoe and holly.

Small though these Christmas trees may look, silhouetted against the wintry sky at a height of well over a hundred feet, they really are large enough to grace a children's party, and hoisting them up and securing them in position was no mean achievement. The decorations are provided voluntarily, and there is never a lack of volunteers for the task of putting them into position, for on Christmas Day a ship is known by her decorations.

No matter on which day of the week Christmas Day may fall, the routine for the day is Sunday routine. This means that the "hands" turn out a little later than usual and that work is limited to washing the decks, cleaning paintwork and polishing brightwork. Weekday, Sunday or Christmas Day, peace or war, this "clean ship" must be carried out, for the Navy believes that cleanliness is next to godliness.

"Clean ship" will be nearly completed by the time the hands go to breakfast, but there will still be brightwork to be polished, ropes to be "flaked" (not coiled) down neatly and decks to be cleared up and made shipshape between the end of the breakfast-hour and the time the hands are piped "to clean" into No. 1 Dress—or whatever "Dress of the Day" may have been ordered.

The Navy never talks about changing into a uniform. It always cleans into a numbered dress. Colloquially, these dresses are known as "rigs," and in the days of coal-burning ships it seemed a paradox to hear the pipe "Hands clean into coaling rig," when one knew full well that it was an order to change into the oldest, most disreputable and dirty clothing available in which to do the grimy work of coaling ship.

Many people imagine that the sailor's uniform is a simple affair to put on and easy to look well in. They are wrong. There are many little points to be attended to, and the bluejacket cleaning into his No. 1's takes as much trouble as a débutante dressing for her first ball.

The cap ribbon must be in the proper position and secured with a neat bow. The uniform jumper must be properly cut or it will look atrocious. It requires real artistry to get a pair of bell-bottomed trousers to hang as they should, and to wear them properly. The blue jean collar with its three rows of white braid must fit snugly on a man's shoulders and the tapes which secure the black silk neckerchief must be neatly tied and of the proper length. There are 101 points to be attended to.

The first ceremonial of the day takes place with traditional and simple solemnity at "Colours," when the White Ensign is slowly hoisted, the Royal Marine Guard paraded on the quarterdeck presenting arms, while the band plays the National Anthem.

Soon after this follows "Divisions," the Navy's morning parade.

The Divisions of men are fallen-in around the upper deck of the ship. Each division is inspected by its divisional officer, who sees the men are properly and uniformly dressed.

As he walks round, little will miss the divisional officer's eye. Here he will tell a man to "square off his cap ribbon," there a man to adjust his neighbour's collar or medals. Following the divisional officer is one of his midshipmen who, as if by magic, has produced a clothes-brush—and a boot-cloth. One unbrushed jumper or a pair of badly polished boots will ruin the appearance of an otherwise smartly-turned-out division.

Finally the Captain walks round the upper deck inspecting each division in turn, and the parade is over.

Follow the shrill notes of bo'sun's pipes calling the duty hands to "rig church." Divine Service is usually held in one of the "flats" (spaces between decks) or on a mess deck. Pews are built up by resting mess stools and special church planks on capstan bars supported by fire buckets. Chairs from officers' messes are provided for the officers and a lectern and *prie-Dieu* for the chaplain.

As the ship's bell tolls to summon the ship's company, the church pendant is hoisted at the ship's yard-arm to show that her company are at Divine Service.

There is no organ and no choir in this very home-made church. Music is provided by the string instruments and wood-wind of the band, and the age-old and well-known Christmas hymns will not suffer for want of a choir. In spite of the fact that the modern man-o'-war's man is fast becoming—or may be said to have become already—a sophisticated sea-going engineer, he is still something of a child at heart and likes to let himself go and give voice, especially on Christmas Day. He is, too, in common with all seafaring folk, a sentimental creature, and there is many a moist eye in that congregation of men as the familiar hymns known since childhood roll out in the deep unison of male voices.

Church over, and before the hands are piped to dinner, is carried out a Christmas custom handed down through many generations of sailormen. Captain and officers, and if the ship is a Flagship, the Admiral and his staff as well, must go round the mess deck.

The procession forms up as soon as church has been unrigged, and the duty hands have had time to reach their messes, where with their messmates, they will greet the officers on their way round the ship.

Unlike the usual procedure at mess-deck "rounds," no bugler goes ahead to sound the "Alert," which normally would herald the Captain's approach and call the men to attention. The Master at Arms, the senior rating of the ship's company, walks round with the Captain, and all officers, down to the junior midshipman, follow more or less in order of seniority.

At each gaily-decorated mess the officers stop and exchange greetings with the men, after which the ratings make offerings of tit-bits from the heavily-laden mess tables: a piece of plum-pudding from home, a preserved fruit, a cigarette, or even, perhaps, a villainous-looking cigar. It would be ungracious to refuse, though while pocketing the dangerous-looking weed and thanking the donor, one may wonder if one will have the courage even to try it in the privacy of one's cabin later on in the day.

The sailor shows great ingenuity in decorating his mess, and each mess tries to outdo its neighbour's. Chinese lanterns hang from the deck-head. Stanchions are entwined with evergreens and coloured paper-streamers. Small Christmas-trees and bunches of holly are much in evidence. Bunches of mistletoe may be found, too, though there will be no bright young things to fall unwary victims.

Slowly the procession winds its way back to the starting-point and disperses. Christmas rounds are over.

Officers drift back to their own messes, but not for long. Soon they will be visiting others. Warrant officers will walk across to the ward-room. The gun-room will entertain the ward-room and warrant officers and receive their hospitality in return. Calling parties from the various messes will go on board ships lying nearby. The ward-room fills with visitors from other ships, and on this day, in times of peace, women may be found there too; the wives and friends of officers who have come on board for a cocktail before taking their menfolk on shore with them for lunch.

Gradually the ward-room clears and the unfortunate duty officers and any other poor wretch who has nothing to do and nowhere on shore to go settle down to their Christmas dinner, a long time after the usual lunch-hour. The messman excels himself, and Christmas lunch is always a good one, improved by dainties from home.

At one o'clock "liberty men" from the watch on board (in peacetime one watch, half the ship's company, are enjoying Christmas leave at home) are piped and go on shore for short leave. A bare minimum of duty officers and men are left on board. These are "piped down" and soon a silence comes over the ship as they settle down to the profound and comfortable satisfaction of a post-prandial sleep. To all intents and purposes another Christmas Day has come and gone.

NEW COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF THE HOME FLEET: Admiral J. C. Tovey, C.B., D.S.O., the new C.-in-C. the Home Fleet, takes over in his Flagship *Nelson*, where he is seen greeting the officers of the ship. Admiral Tovey has succeeded Admiral of the Fleet Sir Charles Forbes, appointed C.-in-C. Plymouth as from May 1

Once again, when black darkness has fallen, seamen go warily aloft to "sway" down the Christmas-trees and strip the evergreens from the yard-arms and spurs. The rising sun on Boxing Day looks down once more on tall masts and slender yards, bare and unadorned.

Christmas Day is celebrated in the same way on board every ship wearing the White Ensign, be she at home or on some distant foreign station, whether she belongs to the Royal Navy or a sister service of one of the Dominions.

It was on board one of H.M. Australian ships that the writer spent Christmas Day in 1928. Mess-deck rounds had gone off splendidly; the party in the ward-room had been one of the best, when finally we sat down to lunch.

The day was hot—even for a midsummer's day in Sydney. In spite of this we managed to enjoy reasonable helpings of delicious turkey. With the arrival of the sweet, however, the writer met his Waterloo. Borne in proudly on a lordly silver salver, lay a magnificent plum-pudding fiercely aflame from truck to keelson!

Old customs die hard, and though the celebrations this year may be somewhat interfered with by those twin nuisances, Hitler and Mussolini, the Navy's Christmas tradition will survive the Nazi salute and Roman step, and will be lovingly remembered long after these two absurdities are forgotten, or—if thought of at all—merely regarded as part of a horrid nightmare.

BOMBING by the R.A.F. GOES on WITHOUT PAUSE

Drawing by Roland Davies

EVEN AT A HEIGHT OF SEVERAL THOUSAND FEET BRITISH BOMBING AIRCRAFT ARE LIT UP BRILLIANTLY BY THE FORCE OF THE EXPLOSIONS THEY CAUSE

Plane for plane, the R.A.F. are undoubtedly causing far more havoc in air raids than German aircraft are causing in Britain. Night after night, in fair weather or foul, our bombers carry on with their programme, wreaking damage all over Germany and occupied France, and in Italy. To gauge the truth of these statements it is only necessary to refer to the official list of bombings published recently by the Air Ministry. British pilots, in finding their objectives, often have interesting comments to make. On more than one occasion it has been stated that "my cabin was brilliantly illuminated by a series of explosions thousands of feet below." Here is our artist's conception of one such experience

Drawing by Roland Davies

WITH VESUVIUS AS A GUIDING BEACON, R.A.F. HEREFORD BOMBERS CARRY OUT AN ATTACK ON NAPLES

As the unhappy Italians are now learning to their cost, distance from Britain has proved no protection against attack from the air. Apart from the industrial region of the North, the long arm of the R.A.F. has also stretched out to the naval base of Naples. Many highly successful raids have been carried out on this city and much damage has been caused in this vulnerable area. "Vulnerable," because—no matter what else is done—Vesuvius always remains a beacon to guide British aircraft to their objective! In this picture Mr. Davies shows the scene as it must appear to the pilot of a long-distance Hereford bomber: to the back towers the glowering cone of the volcano; in the middle distance is the "Porto Militaire," where naval vessels are moored; and in the immediate foreground is the National Park, with a broad sweep of promenade much used by the Neapolitans

WINTER — AND THE GREEKS — PURSUE THE ITALIANS

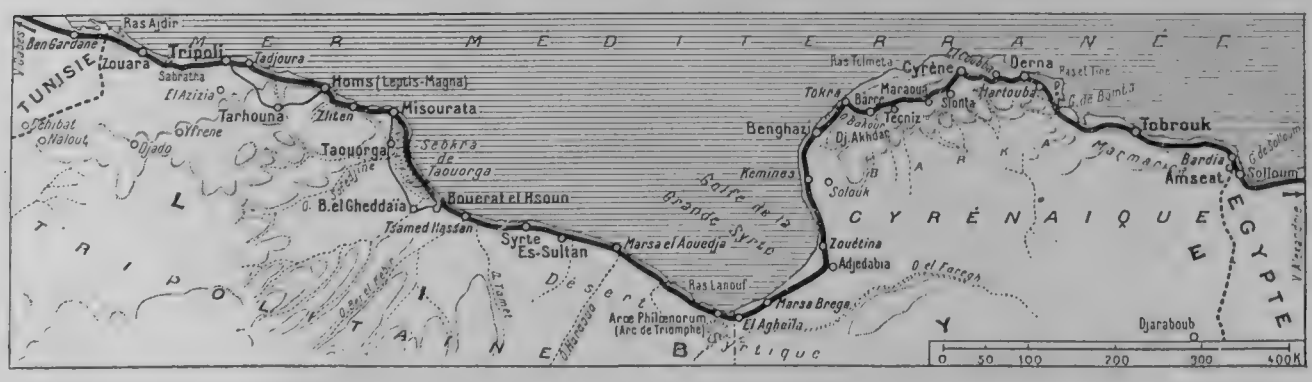
WHERE ROCK-PERCHED HIMARA LOOKS DOWN ON THE LITTLE SEAPORT BELOW: As the Greek advance crept northwards from the frontier, so fresh areas of Albania came into the news. After the evacuation of Santi Quaranta, the Italian forces began to return up the coastal road which, as one writer put it, "goes rocketing upwards towards Valona," by way of Himara, a position of great natural strength. This place is one of the most astonishing in Albania; it stands on the summit of a rock mass which slopes towards the sea; dizzy paths still climb from the lower ground to the dark-brown houses, in which are still to be seen inhabitants wearing the distinguishing Khimariote dress. The road from Port Palermo passes behind the rock mass of Himara; scenes of an extraordinary character must have been taking place daily in this realm of fantastic rock scenery. Snow has now covered all the higher levels.

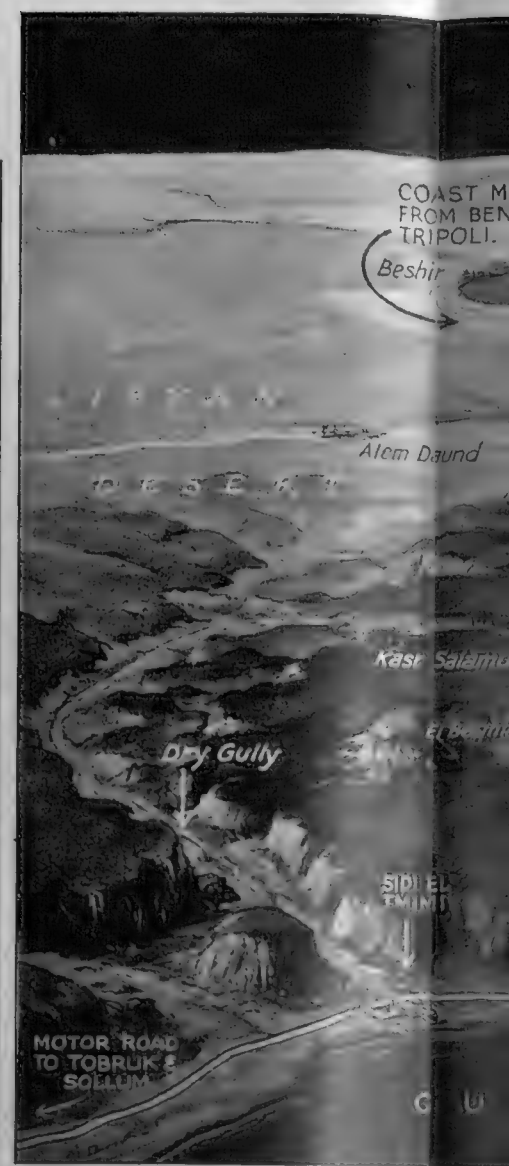
THE ALBANIAN PORT OF VALONA, UPON WHICH THE ITALIAN TROOPS WERE RETREATING LAST WEEK: With the Greek troops steadily working their way over snowy heights and creeping round to the rear of Italian positions, the situation for the Italian army was not pleasant last week. All supplies come by sea, the nearest port being Valona, which certainly has a sheltered landing place, but no extensive harbour, docks, or warehouses. What there is lies to the south of the town, as shown here. The bay is shallow and there seems to be sufficient tidal action to make it not so desirable a landing place as its sheltered position would at first indicate. The visits of the R.A.F. bombers have not improved the Valona anchorage as a place of debarkation. Another portion of the Italian army was retreating along the shore road from Himara; that road enters the view on the right-hand side, under the shadow of the Kanina range, part of which it climbs on its way to the port and town of Valona. Salt-pans and a monastery on the lagoon are indicated to the left. In the background rise the big masses of Kuzesi and the Siloves, both topped by the giant Tomor, 7,933 ft.

BLENHEIM BOMBERS OF THE R.A.F. IMPEDE THE RETREAT OF THE ITALIAN ARMY THROUGH THE ALBANIAN RIVER GORGES: In many places the rivers, low and unnavigable in summer, but roaring torrents in winter, flow through rock gorges or very narrow valleys. On the roads which penetrate these cliffs, the Italian forces retreating before the Greeks have been struggling. Winter has descended rather earlier than usual on the greater part of Southern Albania; and further north, all the country is white with a thickening snow mantle. Koritza, first to fall to the Greeks, had snow weeks in advance of the usual time for the first fall, and from other parts of Europe there are indications of severe weather at the beginning of this portentous winter. The bridges of Albania vary from the most primitive timber construction to the most modern concrete designs by Italian architects. At numerous points the old high-pitched bridges still survive and are in full use to-day. If the bridge has no parapet, the traveller takes his time and picks his way carefully. But most of the wayfarers in these regions are the local inhabitants, as there are few, if any, foreign travellers to-day. The whole of the Albanian countryside—despite the Italian occupation—still remains very primitive

THE FLIGHT OF THE ITALIAN "ARMY OF INVASION" INTO LIBYA: Italy's North African Possession where Heavy Fighting is now in progress

ONE OF THE WEAPONS WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT THE DEBACLE OF THE "INVASION ARMY": The close co-operation of the Royal Air Force with the ground operations during the whole of the advance from December 7 onwards was more than once officially commented upon. As soon as contact was made on the morning of the 9th, R.A.F. bombing and straffing of the enemy troops began in earnest, and was continued literally day and night. The R.A.F. Blenheims also attacked all the Italian supply bases, the brilliant moonlight lighting up the targets each night. As soon as Sidi Barrani was captured, attention was paid to the inner Italian posts along the coast—Bardia, Tobruk and Derna in particular being heavily bombed. The Blenheim bombers soared high in the starlit sky over sea beaches and plateau cliffs as they sought for the most valuable targets

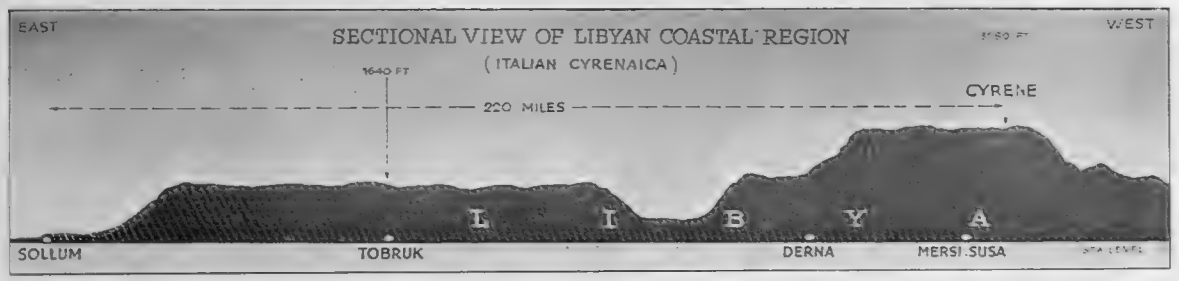




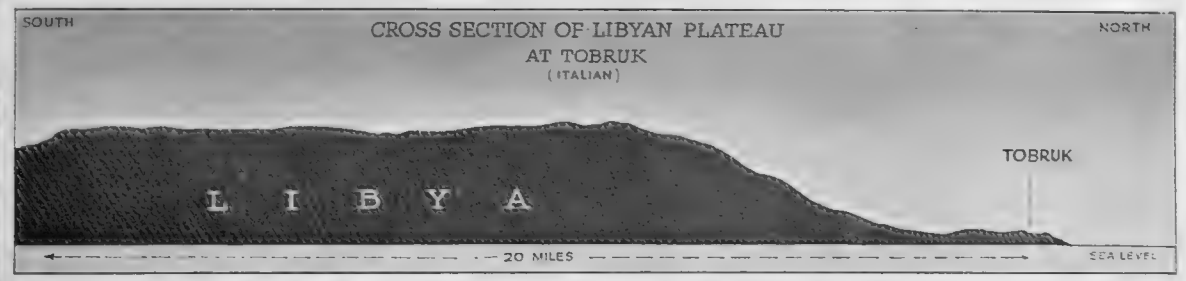
THE CYRENAICAN PLATEAU, THE ONLY VALUABLE
The long line of the North Afr can coast is broken betw forming the high plateau of Cyr ica. It is the only yield any useful return to Italy for her lavish outlay acquired "empire." Italy's wresting of this part of Nor then went, is the latest political change which this in were the first, historically, to occupy Cyrenaica, establ During the subsequent Greek occupation of the platea dates and valuable herbs being exported across the M and gave the name Pentapolis to the prosperous plateau further developed the resources of Cyrenaica. Water s still exist of the numerous cisterns and other devices difficulty then was—and it is still a difficulty to-day—is the abs pervious limestone and disperses itself too rapidly. The ancient sites which have been dra

THE 1,200-MILE COAST ROAD, BUILT BY ITALY AMSEAT ON THE LIBYAN FRONTIER: Thousands which for the greater part of its route runs close to the materials. On the plateau from Benghazi eastwards the to Derna and then on for some scores o

VALUABLE PORTION OF ITALY'S LIBYAN TERRITORY: s broken between the Nile and Tunis by a big northward thrust, is the only portion of all Libya that can be expected to lavish outlay upon the North African section of her recently is part of North Africa from "the Turk" in 1911, as the phrase which this interesting corner of Africa has seen. The Greeks renaica, establishing the famous city of Cyrene about 623 B.C. of the plateau, the district flourished considerably, corn, rice, across the Mediterranean. Five famous cities grew in might, perous plateau. The Romans, when they succeeded Greece, still ca. Water supply was still the pressing problem, and evidences other devices for catching and containing the local water. The day—is the absence of impervious rock; the rainfall soaks through the apidly. The above view shows the modern cities and roads and have been drawn into the whirlpool of war



A SECTION THROUGH THE PLATEAU OF CYRENAICA, TAKEN FROM EAST TO WEST: This section is taken through the northern portion of the high ground, as if the spectator were looking from the sea, with Sollum on the left and Mersa Susa on the right



ANOTHER CROSS SECTION OF THE PLATEAU, TAKEN FROM SOUTH TO NORTH: Twenty miles of the plateau are here shown in section, the high ground to the south rising gently to the north and then dropping steadily to the lower shelf behind Tobruk, the newly developed Italian base on the Mediterranean shore. The rainfall is heaviest along the northern edge. The whole mass shown here is of limestone beds, lying practically horizontal, and of so porous a nature that water rapidly finds its way into the sea without providing the useful wells which are required by the small towns and villages inland

BY ITALY WITH GREAT LABOUR, FROM ZOURA TO R: Thousands of tons of stone formed the basis of the road, ns close to the sea; the surface was finished with tar and other eastwards the road moves away from the coast, cutting across some scores of miles to the Egyptian frontier

EMERGENCY LANDING GROUNDS ALONG THE LITTORANEA, OR SHORE ROAD: At every 65 miles, there are wind-stockings and white guide-lines for any planes flying over the district. A large number must have been little used on this great 1,200-mile stretch of road

BRANCH DESERT ROADS WHICH LEAD SOUTHWARDS INTO THE SUDAN

In addition to the 1,200-mile motor road described on the foregoing pages, there are a number of desert roadways developed along the caravan routes to the Sudan and other areas to the south. These are developed from the mere worn track to a good hard, well-defined highway, as circumstances dictate, just as in French Algeria. The above roadway lies 600 miles south of the shore road

BUILDING AHEAD OF THE POPULATION IN ITALY'S NORTH AFRICAN PROVINCES

The Italian love of erecting colossal buildings is evidenced all along the great 1,200-mile motor road. These serve various purposes; all are built with a local architectural flavour. A short approach connects with the highway; there is no proof that the building has ever got on to what would elsewhere be described as a "business basis"

ENCOURAGING RESPECT FOR THE ITALIAN FLAG

The Italian flag has been strongly in evidence on the balcony in front of the local Governor's house

THE LANDING OF THE GOVERNMENT-SUBSIDISED IMMIGRANTS TO THE TRIPOLITANIA PROVINCE

The transference of 20,000 immigrants into the North African "Empire" was a great feat of organisation. Mussolini himself took the greatest personal interest in the scheme, and was himself present at the port of departure to bid goodbye to the settlers. Everything was done for the immigrants in the early stages of their adventure. The little white houses had furniture and food in them, awaiting the coming of each particular family. It was only the stony aspect of the "Karst" country on which these neat little abodes were placed which might have scared more experienced farmers. Many of them found their subsequent life one of the most appalling loneliness and hardship.

THE DESERT PROVINCES ARE DOTTED WITH FORTS

Both to defend the country and to keep the local inhabitants from any thoughts of insubordination, the territories are dotted with neat little forts, with officers, and wireless communication, and so forth

ITALY'S NORTH AFRICAN "EMPIRE": Scenes in the Provinces of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica

WHERE THE PALM STRUGGLES WITH THE DESERT

Many an oasis in Northern Africa is in this condition of perpetual strife with the invading sand. If the oasis lies in the path of a sand movement it is almost impossible to preserve it against the insidious invader. These palms at Jalo are half-silted up with the golden but deadly grains. The presence of wells and water near the surface is absolutely imperative in the fight against the encroaching desert. If there is a permanent spring, there is generally a thriving community

ALL WAS NOT SMOOTH GOING ALONG THE ITALIAN MOTOR HIGHWAY

In the 1,200-mile route of the Italian shore road, all is not easy going for motor traffic. Various dry valleys and little wadis had to be bridged, but the Italians enjoyed doing this, as they are great road-builders and delight in such undertakings. Often, though, the traffic hardly seemed to warrant these fine highways !

WHERE THE OCCUPATION BY GREECE IS STILL VISIBLE IN CYRENAICA

Down by the sea, which provides a beautiful blue background, can still be seen the columns, walls, and tessellated pavements of the Greek colony of Apollonia. This was a thriving Greek port, exporting rare herbs which Europe would buy at any price. Cyrenaica was famous for its school of philosophers and its heroes of Greek sport, who crossed the sea to take part in the Olympic Games. In classical folk-lore it is famous as containing the Garden of the Hesperides

THE GREAT "HOHENZOLLERN BRIDGE" AT COLOGNE, HEAVILY BOMBARDED IN RECENT RAIDS BY THE R.A.F.

The City of Cologne is the commercial centre of the Rhineland; it is a great railway junction and also an inland port of very considerable importance. It stands at the centre of an extensive network of railways connecting it with all the principal cities of Europe; connecting the city proper with the marshalling yards at Deutz and the factories across the Rhine, is the great triple Hohenzollern Bridge which carries two double-track railways and a highway. During the past few weeks this bridge has been attacked many times, and "it is certain that our bombers must have hindered the flow of essential traffic at this vital point." The bridge, in addition to joining the two parts of the city, also connects North Germany with the Provinces; and much traffic to the countries which Germany has overrun must also go this way. Our picture shows the view towards Deutz and the factory area

AIR COMMENTARY—By C. G. GREY
(Founder of "The Aeroplane")

WHY OUR PILOTS ARE SO GOOD

It Can Be Claimed that They are, in Fact, the Best Service Pilots in the World. Here are Some of the Reasons Why

GENERAL SIR DAVID HENDERSON, who, as a Brigadier General and Director of Military Training at the War Office, became the first Director of Military Aviation, and was therefore the father of the Royal Flying Corps, said in the earliest days of flying—about 1911—that because of our vile weather and our small fields and our broken country and the absence of big rivers or mountain ranges as landmarks, British aviators would necessarily become the best in the world, just as British sailors have become the best in the world because of our gales and fogs and broken coastline.

He was right. Our pilots get into small fields, if they have to make forced landings, in which any foreigner would crash, and they get out of them safely more often than any stranger could do. They start and arrive in weather which would keep anybody else on the ground. And they find their way about rough but rather featureless country, such as the Yorkshire moors and the Pennines and Cheviots and Lowland Scotland, in poor visibility amazingly well. Even "flying by Bradshaw," as following the railways is called, helps but little, for few of our railways run straight for long, and there are so many junctions and branches and cross lines that the permanent way is little help to bad navigators, although it is often useful to good pilots who are also good at geography, as a way of fixing their positions in bad weather. In the piping times of peace this "flying by Bradshaw," I know, was frowned on by all the Flying Clubs and their enthusiastic amateur pilots! But, of course, it had its uses.

That same bad weather and rough country has also influenced our designers of aeroplanes; for, although our machines are as fast as those of any other country, they are more manœuvrable than foreign (including American) types, which helps getting into those small fields, and also helps in fighting. Nevertheless, I still think that all aeroplanes ought to land and get off at half the speed they use at present.

The pity is that Sir David did not live to see how true his prophecy has turned out to be in this war. He died shortly after the last war, but in 1918 he saw the R.A.F. in full command of the air.

To-day, wherever our fighter pilots come up against the enemy, whether German or Italian, they prove that claim to be the best in the world—as has been shown by their readiness to take on the best German formations at any odds, and their ability to shoot them down in the proportion of anything between 3 to 1 and 10 to 1.

Our bomber pilots have equally proved their quality by getting through to their objectives in weather which kept enemy aeroplanes on the ground. Those who watch the day-to-day reports of the air war must have noticed that on many nights in late November and early December, when there were either very few night raiders over this country or none at all, the R.A.F. got through to targets in Germany itself, as well as in occupied territory.

This state of affairs was curiously and sadly shown during the week December 1 to 7, when the Germans lost only four bombers, and we lost eleven. That was partly because our people did a great deal of raiding in daylight on the coastal ports in occupied territory and ran into heavy anti-aircraft fire when they came down through the clouds to get their targets. But the disproportion was caused still more by the fact that the Germans did hardly any daylight bombing, and although they raided Southampton, Bristol, the Midlands and London (according to our official statements) and Portsmouth (according to the German statement), the London and Midlands raids were not on a big scale.

The proper proportion was re-established by the fighters, for we lost five machines against the German loss of twenty-three.

Taking both types together, the estimated loss of the Germans was forty-five pilots and aircrews, and our loss was estimated at forty-nine men. The figures are necessarily approximate, for there is no official information to say how many of the bombers on either side were three-seaters, four-seaters, or five-seaters. But we do know that some of our light bombers in the coastal raids must have been two-seaters.

Similar estimates in that week show that the Italians lost fourteen fighters and one bomber, and seemingly brought down none of our machines. Which at any rate confirms the superiority of our pilots.

THE HEART OF INDUSTRIAL ITALY—THE CITY OF TURIN, MANY TIMES RAIDED BY THE R.A.F.

In a land of great antiquity, Turin presents a very modern aspect—its plan is rectangular, with straight streets some of which are arcaded. It is a great commercial centre, the home of a Royal Arsenal and of the huge Fiat factory. Despite the fact that it lies on the other side of the mighty Alps the city has been raided many times by the R.A.F. and very heavy damage has been inflicted on the armament production. This picture shows the centre of the city with its railway system stretching from left to right: the aircraft is of typical Italian design, of the type used for bombing purposes. The three-engined design is no longer used by other Powers for war purposes

Here I think we may, in fairness, admit that the Italian pilots are not lacking in courage, but rather in training and equipment. An R.A.F. pilot told me a week or so ago that when our fighters came along above the level of the Italian bombers and fighters, the Italians in their little Fiat biplanes gallantly climbed up to meet them in defence of their bombers.

It was pathetic, for the Fiats are all of fifty miles an hour slower than our fighters, and on the climb the speed of any aeroplane drops a lot. On the other hand, our people only had to turn over on a wing-tip and drop on top of the Fiats, which never had a chance, poor little chaps.

But one of our pilots admitted that he was completely foxed by an Italian who, when our man dived and went for his tail, started doing a series of what are called barrel-rolls—that is, a manœuvre in which the aeroplane follows a path like that of a coil of wire pulled out horizontally; not like a corkscrew, which comes to a point, but with each coil parallel to the next.

The speed of the Italian thus dropped so low that our fighter could not stay with him, and the Italian weaved about the sky so much that no gun could follow him. And, I gather, our man laughed so much that he could not shoot, anyway. But that manœuvre is only a way of escaping immediate execution by a faster and better-armed machine, for, as soon as the rolling stopped and the pilot tried to go anywhere right side up, he would be shot down.

The whole question of Italian co-operation in the bombing of Britain is an odd one. At such a moment as this—with heavy operations in both Albania and Egypt—one would have thought that the Italians had their hands full, without troubling about looking for further commitments!

At this period of the war, when we are just about due for big changes in equipment and tactics, I think that we ought to put on record, for historical reasons, a short history of how our pilots were made as good as they are.

In 1917, when the Royal Flying Corps in France were beginning to get their own back, after the Fokker Scourge of 1915-16, we found that although we were getting more and better aeroplanes, and lots more pilots, a new trouble arose in that the pilots were badly trained and were short of air experience. The time found the man, and Major Robert Smith-Barry, one of the Anglo-Irish Barrymore family, put up a scheme for the training of instructors who should instruct other instructors how to instruct. To him was given the aerodrome at Gosport, and he was told to do what he liked there. In a few months he had evolved a system of training which produced first-class pilots in less time than the old system took to produce bad pilots. The Gosport School of Special Flying became the model on which all the best air forces based their training, but only in the British Empire, apparently, can the right material be found with which to get the best results.

After 1918 the School of Special Flying was transferred to Upavon, where the old original Central Flying School of the Royal Flying Corps had been started in 1912, to train all our Service pilots. Later the C.F.S. was moved to Wittering, near Stamford, where the Smith-Barry standard was fully upheld. And a few years ago it went back to its home at Upavon.

There, at an Anniversary Dinner, Marshal of the R.A.F. the Viscount Trenchard, who three times had built up our air power from a very low ebb, bore witness to the fact that to Major Smith-Barry thanks were due for the high level of training in the Royal Air Force, which was the standard by which every other nation measured the quality of its own air force. The tribute was deserved, although Smith-Barry, in replying, disclaimed the responsibility.

So Sir Philip Joubert is not to give us any more of his lucid and heartening broadcast talks, because, as Vice-Chief of the Air Staff, he is too busy to prepare them. That is a pity, for he did more to hearten and convince listeners than did anybody who spoke from the B.B.C. Important as is the work of the V.-C.A.S., surely some of it could be delegated to somebody else so that the British taxpayer might be still further enlightened and convinced on the soundness of our Air Power. Or do the Air Ministry, and the Ministry of Information, now that it has lost Mr. Frank Pick—one of our greatest organisers—intend to adopt that policy of "darkness and composure" which was so depressing in the last war? C. G. G.

A NEW IDEA IN TRAINING-PLANES FOR THE R.A.F.

Just before the war progress was being made in this country with the new tricycle undercarriage for aircraft: the war, for a time, brought these experiments to a close—so far as the R.A.F. was concerned. Now, however, a number of aircraft fitted with this type of undercarriage are coming from the U.S.A. for service with the fighting forces; so that it will become essential soon to train future pilots on this type. The Owlet seen above is a product of a British aircraft company which has been a pioneer in this respect. It should also prove of great value in training young pilots in night flying, which can be done safer and more easily on this type, where a slightly misjudged landing has none of the disastrous consequences which might arise with a more orthodox type

"IS ITALY VULNERABLE?" YES!

Some weeks ago, when everything seemed happy in Italy and all she had to do was to wait for the ripe plums to fall into her lap, the Italian newspaper *Il Tevere* published the above wonderful picture. It showed to a nation, only too anxious to believe, how impregnable Italy was. Was she vulnerable? No! Since then, however, Albania has been invaded by the Greeks, and thus the Adriatic (here shown as a closed sea) has been forced; Libya has been invaded by the Army of the Nile; Abyssinia and Somaliland cut off; the Dodecanese Islands starving; the Italian Fleet crippled; and the mighty Italian Air Force conspicuous only by its absence! On all sides Italy is beset; her sea communications cut, her armies defeated; her industrial areas bombed from across the impregnable Alps; and her ports and harbours raided almost at will. Is Italy vulnerable?

In a recent broadcast Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production, gave some interesting details concerning aeroplanes coming from our own factories and from America. After disclosing that our fighter-pilots are using a new type—the Whirlwind—he went on to say that the British Air Commission in the United States, 350 strong, has bought all the aeroplanes and engines now available: amongst them is the Curtiss P. 40. "It is a good, straightforward job. It flies easily. Its engine is reliable. And in performance and speed it is equivalent to the Spitfire, which we think is very good.

"And the Curtiss P. 40 is only one of many types supplied to us by the United States.

"According to our programme, according to the contracts we have entered into and the bargains we have made, there will be an increasing flow of aeroplanes coming to us from the United States, reaching 26,000 in the year 1942. During that year the famous 3,000-a-month scheme will be realised."

HOW BRITISH PILOTS SEE THE ALPS ON THEIR LONG-DISTANCE FLIGHTS TO ITALY

When flying to Northern Italy on their bombing flights, the British pilots have to fly under endurance-test conditions, so long is the journey: in addition, they have to go up to a great altitude in order to clear the Alps. "The Alps in moonlight," said one pilot, who has made the journey recently, "are different from the country we generally fly over. They are worth all the trouble just to look at. They seemed to be near enough for us to reach out and touch them, covered with snow and glistening sharply in the light, rising like a string of castle walls a bit broken in places trying to bar our way." Another pilot on a similar errand to Italy says that he was amazed at their fantastic and quite unreal appearance; "it was a bit awe-inspiring, because you realise if anything went wrong there wasn't much to do about it!"

THE SEARCH FOR THE HIDDEN FUELLING BASE: ROWING UP THE ESTUARY OF A TROPIC RIVER: The raider's fuelling bases are hidden in the loneliest spots—perhaps an uninhabited island in the Pacific, for the raiders wander in far and remote waters which may yield them a fat prize. The raider has to develop a detective's instinct for anything unusual: here our artist shows a cruiser's boat rowing up a quiet tropic river mouth—no sign of life at present, but one never knows what is round the next bend

THE search for enemy supply bases overseas and the running down of surface raiders are very important functions of the cruiser. Both involve many weary miles of monotonous steaming with a fifty-to-one chance that all the labour and fuel is wasted, but on the rare occasions when contact is made the result is invaluable and compensates for everything. If the enemy is going to establish a hidden base for the supply of oil and ammunition, it will naturally be in a most out-of-the-way spot—an uninhabited island or deserted coast, if possible—which will entail a voyage beyond the bunker capacity of the smaller types and will demand either a regular cruiser or a large armed liner. Unless there is definite information to work upon, many places will probably have to be searched, with due regard to the susceptibilities of their neutral owners.

Regular cruisers are essential for the hunting down of surface raiders, which have all the advantages in the game. To corner the famous *Emden* in 1914, no less than nineteen men-of-war had to be taken off other important work, practically all of them more powerful than she. At the present time we simply have not the ships available, so it is necessary to

A SHOT ACROSS THE BOWS OF A CURIOUS-LOOKING STRANGER: There is something indefinably wrong about the appearance and the position of the dirty-looking stranger which the cruiser has just encountered. Expectation runs high as the vessel is challenged: she may, indeed, be the supply ship for a lurking raider, or be employed on some other furtive and sinister errand

THE WORK OF THE CRUISER AS A RAIDER-CATCHER

Which Takes the Vessel into Tropic Seas and Up Jungle-lined Creeks, as well as the Colder Waters of the North Atlantic

put more work on the armed liners. They certainly restrict the operations of a raider, and if they encounter her they have the chance of crippling her and of bringing the net close round her by wireless. But it is probable that they will be no faster than she, if as fast, and with the aid of smoke screens she will be able to get away. If one of them does succeed in bringing her to action, it is more than likely that the battle will end like the fight of the Kilkenny cats. The properly designed cruiser, on the other hand, will have several knots in hand over any disguised raider, and even if her guns are of the same or rather smaller calibre, they will outrange hers; while she can ignore the hits that will disable or even sink the auxiliary.

Below—
THE CRUISER SEARCHES A LONELY PATCH S.E. OF THE CARIBBEAN WITH A F.A.A. PLANE HELPING: A wide, apparently limitless sea stretches on every side, when the Fleet Air Arm plane is catapulted into the air and goes off on a wide scrutiny of this lonely sea well off the traffic lanes

A DESTROYER STEAMS UP ALONGSIDE THE CRUISER: Out of the wide grey sea ("the sea is very wide," says Mr. Churchill) a destroyer rushes up to make close contact with the cruiser. After having flashed a message by lamp, "a smudge of smoke to the N.N.W., Sir, an hour ago . . .", a turn of the helm and the destroyer is off again on her beat

ICELAND—WHERE OUR TROOPS KEEP WATCH AND WARD DURING THIS WARTIME CHRISTMAS SEASON

ALL OVER THE ISLAND BRITISH AND CANADIAN TROOPS KEEP WATCH ON VITAL POINTS OF DEFENCE: On this strange island, where nature throws fire and ice in violent juxtaposition, soldiers from Britain and Canada have to guard a rugged coastline from possible attack. Their chief complaint—ruling out the weather, which cannot be helped—concerns the local beer (*bjor*), which must not contain more than 2 per cent. of alcohol. There is also an illegal brand of local brandy which goes by the sinister name of the "Black Death"

IN REYKJAVIK, THE GIRLS ARE SMARTLY DRESSED: There has been plenty of money in Iceland during recent years, owing to the demand for the oil from the livers of cod and halibut, and in spite of recent oscillations of the financial situation, life on the island is quite well-conditioned and in the capital in many ways, quite up to date

THE NATIVE COSTUME IS STILL WORN FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS: The Icelandic young womanhood don these buskined costumes from time to time, and look very attractive in their white linen garb with its outer laced bodice of many colours. Otherwise they wear the latest fashions from Europe or Canada

THERE ARE OPEN-AIR SPORTS AND GAIETIES WHEN THE WEATHER PERMITS: Owing to its northerly position, Iceland has very short nights in summer and very long ones in winter, and further, owing to its position in regard to the Gulf Stream, it has a plentiful supply of rain. In spite of drawbacks in this direction, the Islanders make life gay and cheerful

THE YOUNG SCHOOL CHILDREN HAVE BEEN AMONG THE FIRST TO MAKE FRIENDS: The landing of armed forces on the island naturally produced an unusual situation. The bonhomie of the British troops and the northern tang of the Canadians have steadily won their way. With the building of new Army huts and a large general military hospital, many flats in the crowded capital have been handed back for civilian use

ITEMS of WAR NEWS

THE MAN WHO GETS THE AEROPLANES

Lord Beaverbrook, first Minister for Aircraft Production, at work in his office on the task of getting the greatest number of aircraft in the shortest space of time and at the lowest cost. In the last war, too, Lord Beaverbrook held Ministerial rank, as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and then as Minister of Information. His great services to the nation have already been praised by the Prime Minister

A FAMILY AFFAIR IN SUSSEX

Although the population of Small Dole, one of the tiniest hamlets in Sussex, is less than 170, the local Home Guard is over thirty strong. Nearly all the members are related, and the youngest Guard is seventeen years of age and the oldest sixty-five. They are here seen in the main street of the village. The response to the demand for Home Guard Volunteers has been strongest in the rural areas, most of the able-bodied men in the country joining up at the very first call

THE NEW SOUTHERN COMMAND G.O.C. GETS TO WORK

Lieut.-General the Hon. H. R. L. Alexander has just been appointed to command in the South. Here he is pictured at his desk with two of his staff officers. General Alexander took over the command of the B.E.F. at Dunkirk after the departure of Lord Gort and stayed until the evacuation had been completed. He is one of the youngest officers to hold such an appointment within recent years

CHISLEHURST HOME GUARD ON PARADE

An inspection and parade of the 4th (Chislehurst) "P" Battalion, Home Guard, has just taken place at the local cricket ground. Here the men are passing Zone Commander F. W. Chamberlain, who inspected all sections of the Civil Defence Services and took the salute at the march-past

POLISH FIGHTER PILOTS DECORATED

Four pilots of the Polish Fighter Squadron which played such an important part in the air defence of London in September were decorated recently with the D.F.C. at an aerodrome in the north of England. Air Marshal W. Sholto-Douglas, after decorating the men, said: "The R.A.F. is proud to have its Polish comrades, whose deeds are known throughout the whole Air Force. I hope your Squadron will do equally well in the months to come. I look forward to the victory of our cause and to a free and independent Poland"

THE CZECH PARLIAMENT MEETS IN LONDON

For the first time in its history the National Council of Czechoslovakia has just met on foreign soil. The Council, which is the equivalent of the British Parliament, was opened by Dr. Benes, the President, who is here seen reading his inaugural address. The Czechs are amongst the most determined opponents of the Nazis

CHIEF ACTORS

Men and Women who Have World-wide Drama of

MISS DOROTHY THOMPSON, wife of Mr. Sinclair Lewis, ardent friend of Great Britain and a broadcaster throughout the United States

MR. SUMNER WELLES AND MR. JOSEPH KENNEDY: The former was President Roosevelt's Special Envoy to Europe; the latter was U.S. Ambassador in London, since resigned under peculiar circumstances

MR. WENDELL L. WILLKIE: Unsuccessful Republican candidate for the U.S. Presidency, defeated at the polls in November

GENERAL DE GAULLE: Leader of Free Frenchmen throughout the world

M. GEORGES MANDEL: Former French Minister, under trial in France

IT is customary at this time to sum up Personalities of the Year. I thought, just for a change, we might go one farther. Instead of the obvious list starting with Churchill, whose year it has crowningly been and proceeding via Laval, Pétain, Leopold, Roosevelt, and so forth, down to an orthodox conclusion with Badoglio or even Musso himself, why not search out figures who have sprung from nowhere, as it were, on to the war scene in many lands? People who, not necessarily quite unknown in their own countries, yet a year ago meant little or nothing to an outside world since become familiar with their names.

"Nothing happened till April," you hear. But have we already forgotten Finland's early lifting of a torch that was to be avoided by other small nations until Greece grasped it towards the end of the year? The talk was all of Mannerheim a year ago, and rightly so, since his "Line" did function. Possibly the other Finnish character that stands out most in retrospect is the "Lotta," anonymous first woman heroine of this war.

Sumner Welles was a newcomer contemplated with closest interest as he strode from capital to capital of Europe at war. Had he a peace plan? Was he assembling from both sides data to take back to his President, who then would approach the belligerents? What Mr. Welles was really doing was filling the void created by several U.S. envoys having for a variety of reasons not been at their European posts for some time—as Mr. Kennedy, who, while Ambassador to Britain, spent three of the opening six months of the war in Florida, or thereabouts. Mr. Welles had to "go get" the latest facts of the situation for his boss.

It is meet to interpolate that both Britain and the United States stand in need of cultivating something new in envoys for normal as distinct from wartime posts. Our American friends have been wont to rely overmuch on amateurs inclined to work for self and/or to lose balance. *We* require to step out more vigorously, quit aloofness and stodgy orthodoxy.

Indeed, we could profit notably from U.S. diplomatic "mixing" and salesmanship as these are practised in foreign countries; while Americans could profitably draw upon the steadier background and the lack of self-seeking of British diplomats.

Does the late Lord Lothian's direct approach method herald a new style diplomat, in which Anglo-American flaws have been deleted and virtues maintained?

Koht, Quisling, Turner, Warburton-Lee. Memories of "Oslo" and after! We began by cordially disliking Foreign Minister Koht for his seeming craven neutrality as Finn friends were crushed. Our mood changed when the Professor told Hitler where he descended, and when Koht stood weeks of peril and hardship beside his hunted King.

Norway might not have stood so solidly had her important fugitives failed to reach England: as the months draw on we should increasingly appreciate what vital effect on the outcome of the war Hitler's wholesale sprawling across Europe may bring. His policing minions ever more thinned out, more bored, boycotted, crestfallen; should be in no enthusiastic martial mood to withstand popular risings in their rear, in the Captive States.

To be "a Quisling" has by now passed into most languages. The interesting thing about the gallant Major of that name is that he has turned out such a dud. Was it really not possible in all those years for Hitler to find someone with more ability and character to act as his Norwegian puppet? Now that Quisling is being dropped, all Hitler can do is to fall back upon his own Nazi Terboven.

Lieut.-Commander Talbot Turner leapt into prominence as he jumped seven feet across to the *Altmark* in Jösing Fjord, shouting "Come on! Follow me!" Tall, lanky, ex-Marathon runner, this officer was in his element. Captain Warburton-Lee's first V.C. of the war will live. At a low moment he gave us all heart by trouncing a superior force inside Narvik Fjord; his dying words, "Swim for it!" feebly echoing to his men. Why not include splendid V.C. deeds such as those of R.A.F. heroes Hannah and Nicholson? Or the opening Army V.C.s, Nichols and Ervine-Andrews? Because to do so would be to lose perspective, to concentrate unduly upon these islands.

Now the band began to play in earnest. Europe's war stage crowded as country upon country fell to Hitler. Among the unheralded actors General de Gaulle stood forth. Who had ever heard of him before! A few of us in France, who vaguely recalled a colonel who some years before had written a book calling for a small professional army mechanised to the *nth* degree. But Churchill had noted his man; and so Free France was born, whose vowed and only ending must be de Gaulle saluting at the Arc de Triomphe.

At present much is in the melting-pot. Is there any chance of de Gaulle mending matters with Weygand? Seemingly not, though Mediterranean events might force a polite liaison, much to be desired by Britain. And just what does de Gaulle stand for in the way of a future regime in France? That also awaits elucidation, the General meanwhile restricting himself to one aim: the liberation of his country. But a de Gaulle regime, did one materialise, could scarcely be other than of authoritarian ingredients.

A second Frenchman, if spared, should not be far away: Mandel. This Jew, barely known beyond France's borders, missed the Clemencist mantle, thanks to Lavalian treachery and self-abasement. Mandel could have borne that mantle in Algiers. Of a different kidney was Baudouin, who sprang from a bank to a Foreign Secretaryship that terminated nowhere. Baudouin never sounded genuine to me, neither his regeneration plans nor his accredited mysticism. More likely just another *arriviste* making the most of a unique interlude.

The briefest noonday of notoriety fell to the Comtesse de Portes before she died in a suspicious Riviera road accident as she speeded beside her fallen friend, Paul Reynaud, to a temporary fade-out. That she domineered over the last Premier of the Third Republic, undermined Reynaud's will to resist when all was by no means yet lost de Gaulle tells us so. We shall know more some day of one who afforded a classic instance of *cherchez la femme*.

Dunkirk. The inspiration of Churchill, freshly installed, planed over this victory-in-defeat. The welter of epochal drama brought only one or two forward from back-stage. It was all too much of a gigantic mix-up. Yet mention there must be of those opening

MR. J. B. PRIESTLEY, novelist and broadcaster, whose talks were followed eagerly by thousands of Englishmen and Americans

CAPT. B. A. W. WARBURTON-LEE, awarded the V.C. posthumously for his wonderful attack on the Germans at Narvik

VERGILIO GAYDA, journalist, of Italy, who spends his life hero-worshipping Mussolini

GENERAL A. PAPAGOS, Commander-in-Chief of the Greeks, who spends his life trouncing Mussolini

ADMIRAL TOVEY, Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet, who has just succeeded Admiral Sir Charles M. Forbes

ADMIRAL SIR ANDREW CUNNINGHAM, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, now operating against the Italians

In the 1940 SCENE

Achieved Prominence in the Past Twelve Months

By FERDINAND TUOHY

V.C.s of the magnificent R.A.F., Garland and Grey, who held up the Germans at Maastricht by bombing a capital bridge. Down into a valley of certain A.A. death they flew, after the squadron had drawn lots as to who should go.

Hitler made eight or ten Marshals in the first flush of victory, but I 'm blessed if I can remember any of their names and doubt if many Germans do, either. While some may talk of General This and General That, I have heard that on our side Major-General Alexander, Irish Guards, emerged as the surprise for German strategists who had announced our army as finished. Now he has risen to be G.O.C. of the vital Southern Command and may one day command any B.E.F. returning to the Continent.

There 's " Cobber " Kain, too, before quitting France. During that Sitzstill from October to May, which should only seem the weirder as the years slip by, " Cobber " shared with Gracie the stardom of the B.E.F. Like one of the first air heroes of the last war, Warneford, V.C., " Cobber " was killed joy-riding.

AIR MARSHAL SIR PHILIP JOUBERT, who has been broadcasting on the war by air : his broadcasts have now ceased

" COBBER " KAIN, the New Zealand pilot who became the first flying ace of the war in France

Meanwhile, over the ocean an unknown was riding to town amid a blaze of publicity such as few new arrivals have ever had. Wendell Willkie. As factors in the recent election become clarified, we should learn whether we had a benign escape in Willkie's defeat : whether he had been cunningly reared by powerful forces purporting to be only isolationist, but which were in reality something more.

One thing is certain: had Willkie won he would have been perpetually hampered and obstructed by powerful interests, whatever he sought to do in Britain's aid. At the worst he might have been completely stymied.

Maybe the woman playing the biggest role in this war, with the possible exception of " Little Ellen the Shelter Queen," is Dorothy Thompson, who has shown what a woman-journalist can really be after that branch had become slightly tarnished through soothesaying. In Paris, a French version of Goebbels arose in Marcel Déat, ex-professor of philosophy. This ardent Hitlerian used to adorn the French *News Chronicle*. As in resembling cases, his metamorphosis occurred almost overnight.

From Paris, too, I recover Herr Ambassador Abetz. This " mixing " Nazi plays a paramount part in the attempted Nazification of France. Once he used to support the Ritz bar. That was when he was buying corrupt Paris, as Ribbentrop's agent. To-day he is lord high everything at the Crillon, openly manipulating Flandins and Lavals.

Abetz's armed visit to Vichy in order to release Laval according to the Führer's will is likely to remain a lasting moment in the war. The three hours' interview with Pétain may have left the old Marshal ruffled, but not his young interlocutor. Abetz was chosen among thousands as Nazi Mixer No. 1. His social grace and *savoir faire* were carefully nurtured, as was his ability to dispense endless champagne while himself remaining impeccable.

One effect of war *à la mode* is to sink international art, sport, literature, and to drive science underground as a secret thing. Propaganda blankets all. But the Haw-Haws and Gaydas must be getting fearfully sick of their own voices. Yet how foolish are they who still decry the radio as prime war weapon! Paul Ferdonnet, erstwhile " Traitor of Stuttgart," whence he nightly harangued the Maginot and the nation behind it, has been worth whole army corps to Hitler. He is so still, in proselytising those fellow-countrymen who last winter sentenced him to death.

Over here, it has been a Priestley-Joubert affair on the air. In more solid realm, Lord Woolton opened a distinguished newcomers' list that presently showed three exceptional arrivals in General Brooke, Air Marshal Portal, and Admiral Tovey. How many, a year ago, had ever heard of one of them ? Well, there they are to-day, leading us in the three elements in Britain's gravest hour.

In point of fact, this has been an unequalled year for domestic change and resultant new arrival on the scene. Have you noticed that but three of our entire list of war leaders in all spheres of September 3, 1939, still endure ? Mr. Churchill, Lord Halifax and Admiral Pound ; nor is it so certain that this tiny survival list may not shrink further in the near future.

A sailor to expand in world estimate has been Admiral Cunningham. Nor should a second Mediterranean character be overlooked : Dobbie of Malta. The General is said to recall Gordon. His steadily controlled defence of an island only sixty miles from Fascist territory has surprised those who reckoned Malta's loss " only a matter of time."

And at year's end comes the triumphant Wavell bearing upon high the banner, the instinct and method of Allenby, his master in 1917-18. When we become one day more closely informed of what ruses and tricks lay behind the victory of Sidi Barrani, I feel sure we shall be reminded of the victory of Beersheba in October, 1917.

An anonymous Fleet Air Arm is all we yet have to cite for the spectacular victory of Taranto. All the more cause to mention such others as we know by name—a Fogarty Fegen whose fighting of the *Jervis Bay* secured a posthumous V.C. which, in fact, covered the ship's company. Germans, for their part, were regaled with stories of the young fighter pilot Wieck, killed near the Isle of Wight after fifty-six victories. The R.A.F. agreed that Wieck had well earned the redoubtable crown " Richthofen's successor."

The Battle of London produces brave men and women nightly, but the interminable handing round of " wonderfuls " and " marvellous " is beginning to make some people writhe. However, a hero after London's heart, and the world's, was Captain Davis, G.C., and what I liked best was when he said he 'd have put the same effort into saving a row of workmen's dwellings as he put into saving St. Paul's.

" Time-bomb " Leighton-Morris refreshed one as the West End Johnny almost stepping out of Wodehouse. What a pity the Press wouldn't leave him alone.

A dangerous customer was Anna Wolkoff on account of her mingling in certain ambiences, her intellect, and her *mission*. We may be sure that what earned her ten years here would have meant beheading or the firing squad elsewhere. There is something particularly foul in a person seeking sanctuary in a country and then turning spy against it. Winifred Harle is another story, but why, oh, why, should the newspapers christen her " the Miss Cavell of this war " when they precisely wish to save this Englishwoman of 1940 from Miss Cavell's fate ?

Rumania presented General Antonescu and Horia Sima, and judging by the way things have a habit of turning in this disintegrating land cursed by its own natural riches, further debuts lie ahead. Greece preferred to offer for our consideration a conquering General Papagos whose apt hand appears to have been at the root of success. We await first results from the soldier pitted against him : General Ugo Cavallero.

GENERAL MANNERHEIM of Finland, leader of that country's army at the time of the Russian invasion

M. KOHT, Foreign Minister of Norway, whose determination to remain neutral ended with the German invasion !

GENERAL I. ANTONESCU, Premier and Dictator of Rumania, now working with the Nazis

VIDKUN QUISLING, the Norwegian who betrayed his country when he became the tool of the Germans

M. BAUDOUIN AND M. PAUL REYNAUD : Former French Premier, now under trial in France, and his Chef de Cabinet, now a prominent member of the Vichy Government

M. MARCEL DÉAT, a former French Minister of Air, who turned Fascist overnight

HERR OTTO ABETZ, German Envoy in Paris and a nominee of Ribbentrop

GENERAL SIR ALAN BROOKE, Commander-in-Chief of the Home Forces in succession to General Lord Gort, V.C.

AIR MARSHAL SIR CHARLES PORTAL, new Chief of the Air Staff in succession to Sir Cyril Newall, who is going to New Zealand

An ESCAPE from the WAR

Junk or Gold-mine? A Shattered Idol; and More Praise for Trollope. With a Blank Page of New Year Resolutions

GETTING RID OF RUBBISH.—Here is a footnote to two questions of the hour which I have discussed on this page of late—the pulping of waste paper from offices and the "comfort" and freedom of being relieved of accumulated possessions by enemy action.

I came across a large file of dusty relics the other day; it contains documents concerning a number of literary and historical researches made by me in the course of business during the past 25 years. I hesitate to scrap this file. None of its contents, I admit, is of any great value, and I dare say I should have thrown it away if my eye had not chanced to light upon a piece of information which interested me again. This led me to reprieve the file and to make a catalogue of its contents. I dare say that all the light which it throws on obscure matters is to be found somewhere else in the world. Nevertheless, I shall keep it a little longer.

Here is the catalogue:—Attempted assassination of King Alfonso at his wedding. Part played by officers of the 16th Lancers in protecting Queen Ena. History of Marlborough House.

Madeleine Smith. Story of her life from after her famous trial for the murder of Angelier to her death. Marshal MacDonald, Duke of Tarentum—his family history. His father was Niel MacEacharn, who helped to row Prince Charlie from Benbecula to Skye when he escaped with Flora MacDonald. Flora MacDonald. Details of her family history and a letter written to her by Niel from Paris in 1749.

Bubb Dodington, Lord Melcombe, eighteenth-century political buffoon. His parentage and curious details of his life. The Ladies of Llangollen. Several rare old pamphlets and local guide-books dealing with the lives at Plas Newydd of Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby, with inventory of their famous curios, and some account books.

Lady Augusta Noel. The origins of her fine novel *From Generation to Generation*.

Thomas Creevey. Final and definitive facts concerning his parentage and early years in Liverpool—facts not yet given to the world.

There are one or two other matters besides. None of them is of much importance, but the file is rather a curious scrap-bag of unconsidered trifles. It may be that none of my descendants will have any interest in these half-obliterated byways of social history, but . . . I shall keep the old file.

Our war effort will not be greatly weakened by keeping it, and one day perhaps these scraps of knowledge may amuse or instruct a generation unborn. Who knows? One day people may be more interested in the origins of Bubb Dodington than in the origins or fate of Hitler, a more dangerous buffoon. I hope it may be so.

R.L.S. — Forty Years On.— A generation back, most boys were at one time or another readers and lovers of Stevenson. With me it was blind devotion and I could not endure to hear him criticised—partly, perhaps, because so many of his principal detractors wrote in jealousy, spite or cattishness. And I maintained my blind devotion until middle age, and have usually included at least one or two of his inferior books, with his acknowledged classics (*Ballantrae*, *Weir*, *Jekyll and Hyde*), in any list of recommendations for holiday or "escape" reading.

Among them *St. Ives*. *St. Ives* was the first book read aloud to me by my father, and I recently commented on the blind and uncritical partiality which a man will retain for books read aloud to him in the first instance, a partiality rather for the loved voice of the reader than for the merits of the book.

So, when the other day I was looking for a story to read aloud to my children, I chose *St. Ives* without question, and very early in the reading I lost a life-long illusion. The story is clumsy, the hero tiresome, foolish and not very sympathetic; the situations are forced, the conversations long-winded and irrelevant and the expedients and escapes dragged-in and unconvincing, time and again. And as for the language—that perfection of style towards which R.L.S. constantly strove—it *is*, after all, a true bill to convict him (at least in *St. Ives*) of torturing and twisting our language to achieve, not historical accuracy in contemporary speech, but a tongue-twisting, redundant, tiresome style which it is well-nigh impossible to read out loud with ease and smoothness. It is a hateful admission, it is bitter to shatter an illusion of youth at any time of life, but—it is a true bill. R.L.S.'s classics remain on their pedestals. His lesser books (among them *Kidnapped*, *Catriona* and *St. Ives*) abide our question and reveal gaping joints. It has taken me forty years to find it out.

Through the Magic Door.—You take the train from Paddington and travel (not, of course, as fast as formerly) to Barchester Junction. There you alight and get a slow train south-west to Barchester for Plumstead Episcopi or Chaldicotes; or you travel on west to Silverbridge for Framley, Hogglestock and Allington, or the ducal acres of remoter Omnium, or the slightly less noble preserves of Courcy and Grehamsbury. It matters not which train you take, or which road, after reaching the magic junction. For it is all a new world, an escape area, remote from war. No bombs drop there, no sirens wail; there is no intermittent buzzing sound.

You are in the fairyland of Trollope, who could invest the financial transactions and wrigglings of a country parson, passing rich on £80 a year, with all the importance and thrill of the diplomatic wrigglings of Hitler and Ribbentrop. And Trollope's world-order has lasted, and will last, has more importance (and will have) than that of any dictator or his minions. In short, I have recklessly re-stocked my depleted Trollope shelf. In my experience as a book-lender, I find that morality is nowhere lower than among those who borrow Trollopes.

My wastage of Trollopes is 40 per cent. I start fair and square again with the expenditure of 30s. in that pretty *World Classics* edition printed at Oxford.

Where shall I begin again? With the career of Finn, or with the clerical history of Barchester? Shall I follow Palliser to his glorious apogee or Johnny Eames to his obscure goal? Or shall I fight beside the archdeacon in his vigorous campaign and vendettas?

It matters not at all. You can take Trollope up anywhere and become absorbed and blind to the noises and hates and horrors of modern life after one long, discursive sentence; so heady is the brew of this Chronicler of small beer. Little he realised the value which posterity would one day set on small home-brewed beer. If Trollope could have foreseen the events of a century after his productive life, would he have ventured to blast his own reputation for a generation, by debunking his own and his contemporaries' art, and by contending that there was nothing in the art of novel-writing but slogging along with a time-table and an orderly routine? I doubt it.

But it was not given to him. I doubt if it be given to one artist in twenty—to comprehend the potence of the talent hidden within him and by him underrated, if not despised; misunderstood, if not mis-used. Not one artist in twenty ever dies with faith that his works will survive the centenary of his first creation.

THE COUNTRY IS STILL AS LOVELY AND—IN MANY PLACES—AS PEACEFUL AS EVER: It is one of the minor tragedies of the war that those Country Lovers who live in town can now only rarely come into personal contact with the countryside. What with petrol rationing, restricted railway services and Prohibited Areas, access to favoured spots is no longer easy. It is for this reason that we publish pictures such as the above from time to time in these pages. This picture comes from Constable's country in Suffolk; it shows the November-December floods in this area. The reeds have been cut, leaving the bright yellow stalks shining in the winter sunlight

New Year Resolutions.—My paragraph on New Year resolutions shall be as that chapter on snakes in the Irish History-book. At the best of times, a catalogue of good resolutions, made out in January, makes sorry reading in February. But this is wartime and the spate of official forms to be filled in, cheques and P.O.s to be drawn and despatched, licences to be renewed, and warrants to be obtained to enable bare existence to be carried on, prevent a man from devising new obligations and stricter standards for the conduct of his life. For life is real and life is earnest enough already, and those who see January 1, 1942 will find it more earnest still.

When a man has paid to the Government under Schedule A and B the full value of the rent he would willingly accept for his own house, has parted with half of what he hasn't earned under other schedules, has carried on in a house which he cannot keep in bare repair and cannot pay to heat, even if fuel were available, has paid the rate collector for services he does not enjoy, and the tradesmen for food he does not (particularly) enjoy, has gone blindfold through eighteen hours in every twenty-four, dodged so much of the *Blitzkrieg* as may have come his way, and carried out so much of his normal and wartime duties as the posts and telephone war services permit, he has no thought of making new resolutions. He is thankful enough to preserve such resolution as he may call his own.

J. G.

On you alone this man depends

. . . he is the skipper of a mine-sweeper
and he is stretching out his hand to you
for your binoculars.
. . . so is a coast-defence watcher — an
A.A. gunner — a tank commander in
the desert.

* * *

Week by week, as our battle front
grows wider, the need for binoculars
grows larger and more urgent.
It would take thousands of workers
at least twelve months to manufacture the
binoculars we need at this
very moment.
We must release these men for making
gun-sights and bomb-sights.
Every pair in the country
is needed — for that skipper — for some
fighting man.

* * *

**Bring out your binoculars
for active service now. A fair price
is being paid by the Government
for every suitable pair.
Or you may give them.**

★Take your pair to the nearest optician displaying the Ministry of Supply poster. There is one near you. HE IS GIVING HIS SERVICES FREE. OR you can post them to the Binocular Officer, 191 Regent St., London, W.1. Attach a label giving your name and address. If you want to *give* your binoculars, mark the label "*Gift*".

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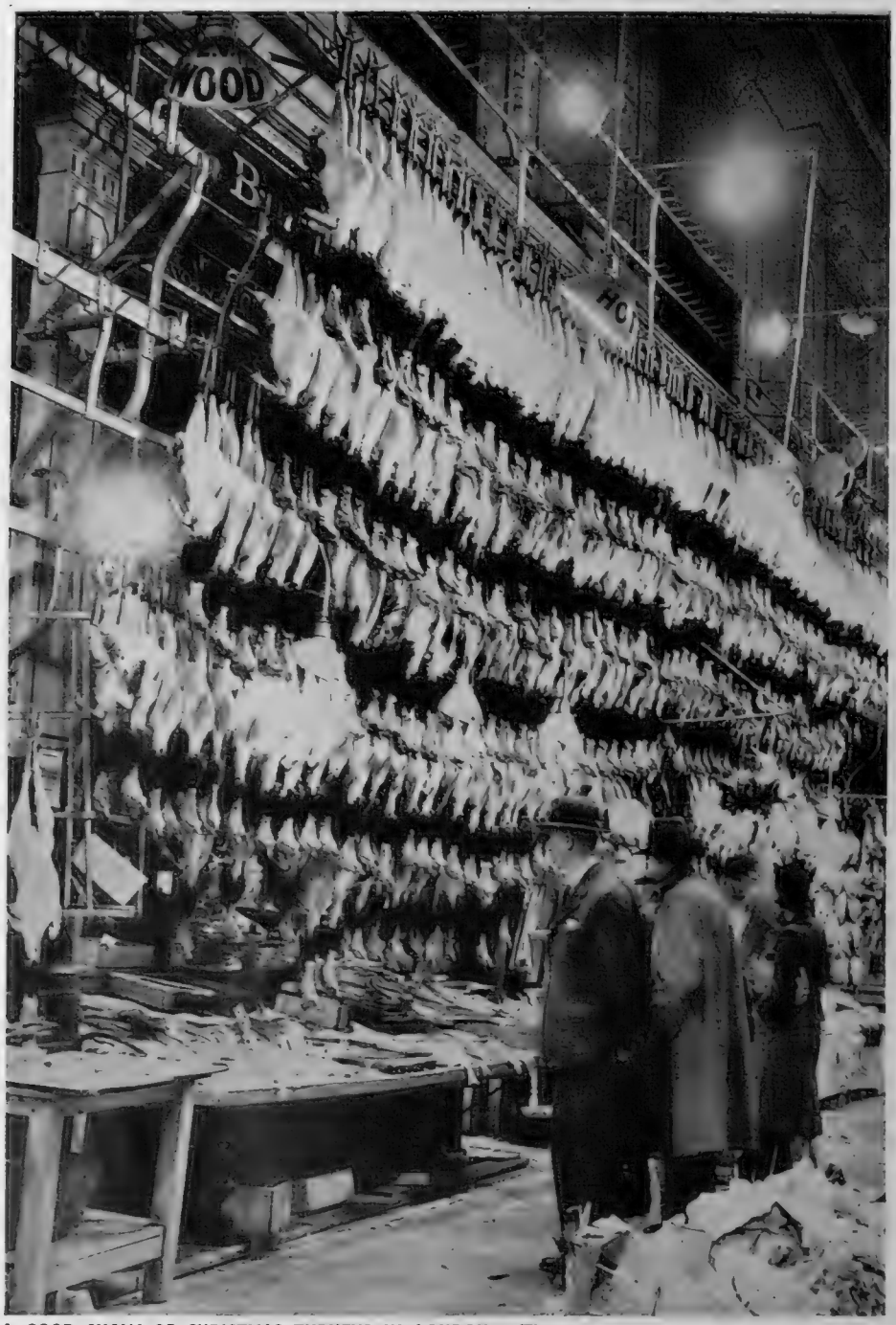
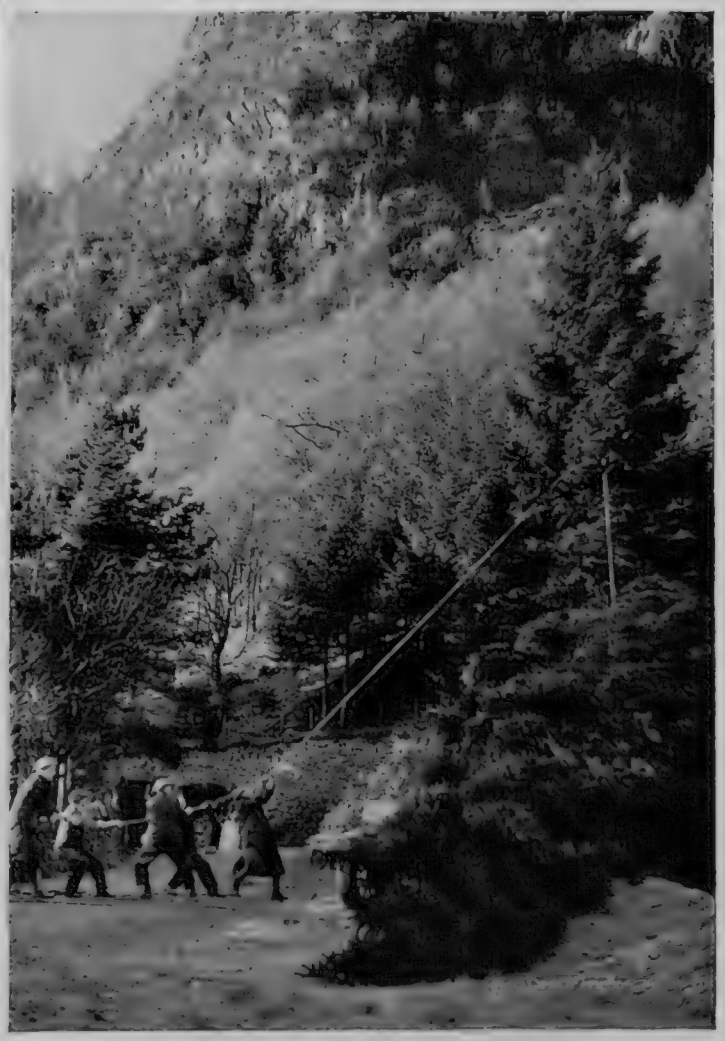
The CHRISTMAS SEASON

Four Pictures from London and Lakeland with a Seasonable Flavour



A GOOD SHOW OF CHRISTMAS TURKEYS IN LONDON : This poulterer's shop in a London market seemed to exhibit little but prosperity, despite the rationing and the shortage of some other commodities. The display here was well up to pre-war standard, and a fine tribute to the enterprise of the shopkeeper !



FELLING CHRISTMAS GIANTS IN THE LAKE DISTRICT : Christmas-trees have been felled at Thirlmere, in Cumberland, for festivities in all parts of the country. This huge tree—in process of being felled—is destined to stand in the centre of the famous Tower Ballroom at Blackpool, where great preparations have been made for a truly Merry Christmas in traditional style

A CHRISTMAS ATTRACTION IN A BIG STORE : There are many novel attractions in the big West End stores this Christmas. Here is one which has been attracting numbers of youthful shoppers—a Humpty-Dumpty, complete with moving models of the other traditional actors of the famous nursery rhyme

APPROPRIATE GREETINGS FROM THE SNOWY NORTH-WEST : Owing to censorship restrictions, it is not always possible to mention the many vagaries of the British climate. The Censor, however, has so far relaxed as to permit publication of the fact that snow has already fallen in certain parts of the British Isles. The above picture was taken on December 7 at the famous Kirkstone Pass, in the Lake District, and shows the present seasonable aspect of this part of the country where considerable snow-falls have blanketed the hills and fells with a mantle of white

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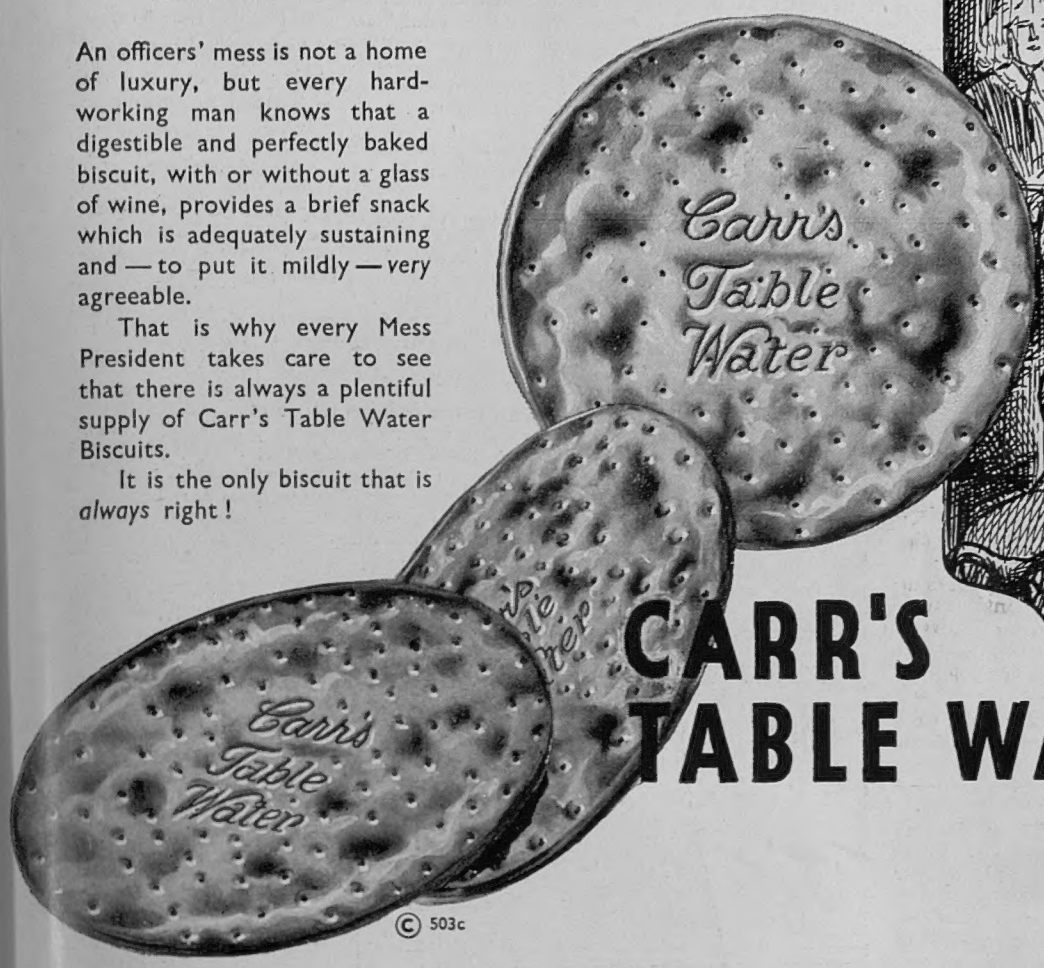

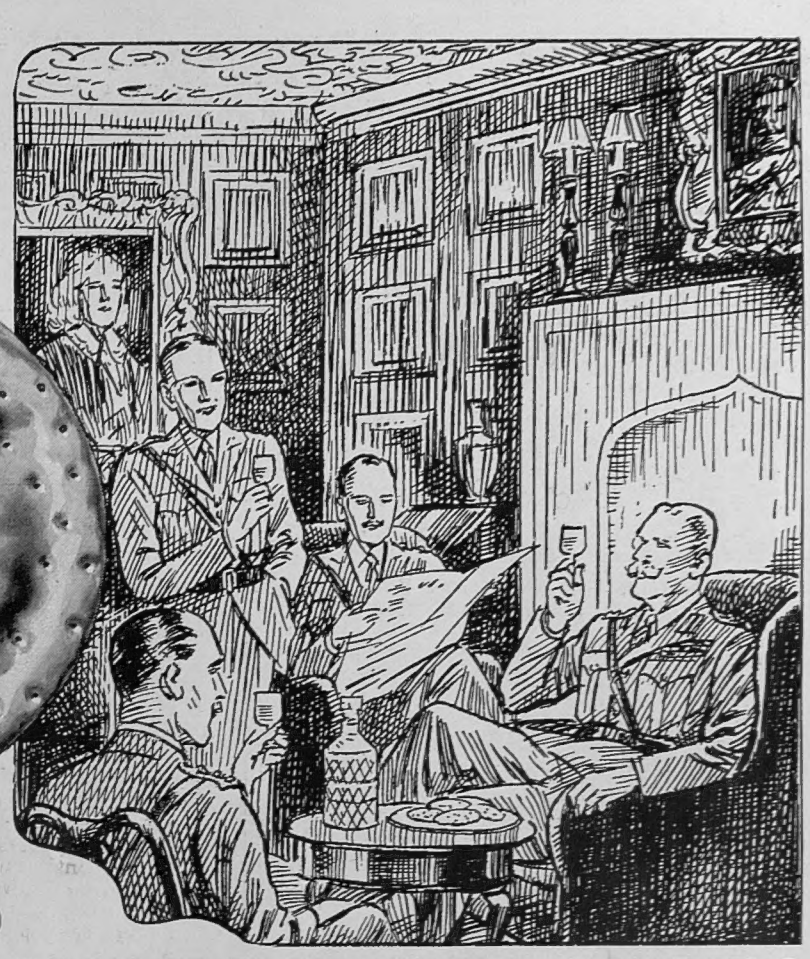

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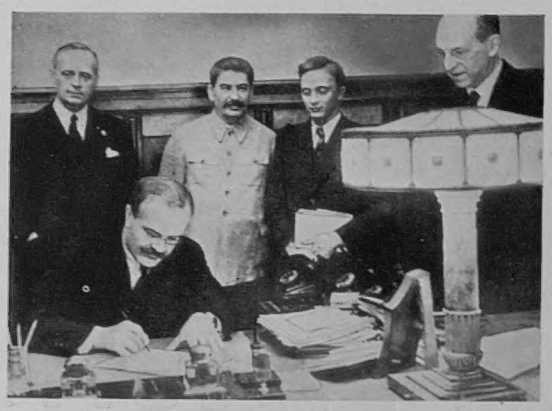
A DIARY of the WAR

(Outstanding Dates from September 3, 1939 to the Christmas Period of 1940)

Five Major Opening Events of the War which Set the Scene for the Second Phase which is now Developing

GREAT BRITAIN, THE EMPIRE AND FRANCE DECLARE WAR ON GERMANY, SEPTEMBER 3



GERMANY'S COUNTER-BLAST, WHICH WAS TO MAKE THE CONTINUANCE OF THE WAR IMPOSSIBLE: THE NAZI PACT WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

THE B.E.F. LANDS IN FRANCE AND DIGS IN BESIDE THE FRENCH ARMY IN THE FIELD

THE INVASION OF THE NEUTRAL COUNTRIES, MAY 1940

THE BATTLE OF THE TANKS IN FRANCE

SEPTEMBER 1939

3. Great Britain and France declared war on Germany—War Cabinet of nine formed with Mr. Winston Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty.
8. Germans advance rapidly into Poland.
11. Arrival of British Expeditionary Force in France.
17. Russian Troops invade Poland.
19. Hitler, at Danzig, announced that Poland had been conquered in 18 days.
29. Russia and Germany agree to divide Poland.
30. Esthonia forced to sign treaty with U.S.S.R., yielding naval and air bases.

OCTOBER 1939

5. Hitler enters Warsaw.
14. German submarine sinks H.M.S. *Royal Oak* at Scapa Flow. 810 lives lost.
19. Anglo-French Treaty with Turkey, for mutual assistance, signed at Angora.
31. Russia declares that Finland has refused Soviet demand for pact of mutual assistance.

NOVEMBER 1939

1. First German plane brought down on British soil.
28. Russia renounced Treaty of Non-Aggression with Finland.
30. Russia invaded Finland.

DECEMBER 1939

13 Battle of the River Plate—German battleship *Admiral Graf Spee* forced to seek shelter, badly damaged, in Montevideo.
17. *Admiral Graf Spee* scuttled outside Montevideo Harbour.
23. First Contingent of Canadians arrive in England.
Finns put up stout resistance to Russia throughout the month.

JANUARY 1940

5. Mr. Oliver Stanley succeeds Mr. Hore-Belisha at the War Office.
9. R.A.F. bomb enemy seaplane base on island of Sylt.
29. German bombers attacked lightships.
Finland continued struggle against Russia.

FEBRUARY 1940

17. The "Altmark" incident. Rescue of British prisoners from German vessel in Norwegian fjord by the Royal Navy.
26. Finns, hard pressed by Russian armies, withdraw to Viipuri.

MARCH 1940

13. Finland signs peace treaty with Russia.
18. Hitler and Mussolini meet at Brenner Pass.
19. R.A.F. bomb Sylt.
20. M. Reynaud replaces Daladier as head of the French Government.

APRIL 1940

8. Mines laid by Allied Navies in Norwegian territorial waters—to prevent iron ore from Narvik passing down "corridor" on Norway's coast.
9. Germany invades Denmark and Norway. Denmark made no resistance. Oslo taken by Germany.
13. Seven German destroyers sunk by British Navy in Narvik Bay.
15. British forces land in Norway.
23. Sharp fighting at Namsos, north of Trondheim.

MAY 1940

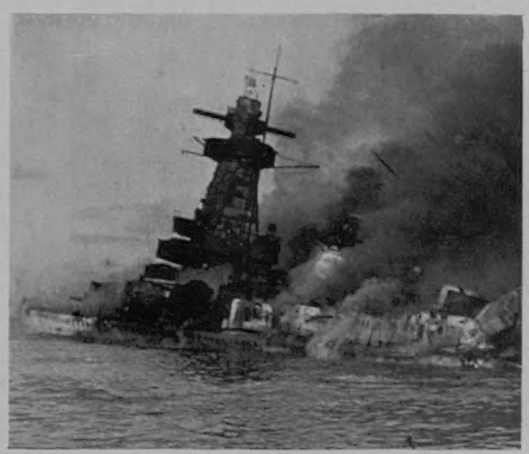
1—3. British troops withdraw from Norwegian ports of Andalsnes and Namsos
10. Germany invades Holland and Belgium—Mr. Chamberlain resigns, Mr. Churchill becomes Prime Minister. Belgium and Holland ask help from Allies. Allied troops entered both countries.
12. Labour Members join the Government.
13. British and French troops stand to east of Brussels.
Dutch Royal Family reach Britain.
14. Germans capture Rotterdam. Dutch ordered to cease fighting.
15. French armies pressed back at Sedan.
17. Germans enter Brussels.
19 General Weygand succeeds General Gamelin as Commander-in-Chief.
24. Germans capture Boulogne.
28. King Leopold of the Belgians capitulates to the Germans.
29. Allied Forces fight their way back to Dunkirk.
30. Evacuation from Dunkirk begins.

JUNE 1940

3. Evacuation from Dunkirk completed. 335,000 men returned to Britain.
10. Mussolini declares war on France and Britain. Allied Forces withdrawn from Narvik. King Haakon and Norwegian Government in London.
14. Germans enter Paris.
16. French Government retire to Bordeaux. Reynaud Government resigns. Marshal Pétain becomes Prime Minister.
17. Pétain asks for armistice.
18. Hitler and Mussolini meet at Munich to discuss terms of armistice.
21. Hitler receives French plenipotentiaries in Foch's coach.
23. France accepts terms. More than half France to be occupied by Germany.
28. Soviet troops march into Bessarabia.
29. General de Gaulle recognised by British Government as leader of Free French.
Marshal Balbo killed in air crash in Libya.

JULY 1940

1. Graziani arrives in Libya to take command.
3. French ships in British ports taken under British control. British naval force attacked French fleet at Oran, when French admiral refused conditions offered. British Sudanese forces retire from Gallabat and Kassala.
10. Italians attack Moyale on Kenya frontier.
14. Home Guard reaches the number of one million volunteers.
19. Italian cruiser *Bartolomeo Colleoni* sunk.
21. Lithuania, Latvia and Esthonia unite with U.S.S.R.
23. Income Tax raised to 8s. 6d.



THE BRITISH NAVY DEMONSTRATES ITS POWERS—THE VICTORY OVER GERMANY'S POCKET-BATTLESHIP, "GRAF SPEE": The first months of the war witnessed this, the most completely satisfactory incident which can be recorded in this diary

AUGUST 1940

6. Italians invade British Somaliland.
8. Great air battle fought off British coast.
15. German aircraft attack in great force. 180 raiders brought down.
19. Evacuation of British Somaliland.
20. Naval and Air Bases offered on lease to U.S.A.
Mr. Churchill referred to exploits of our airmen: "Never in human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few."
21. Rumania cedes South Dobrudja to Bulgaria.
23. London bombed in the suburbs.
24. Central London bombed for first time.
27—29. French Chad Territory, Cameroons and French Congo declare for General de Gaulle and support for Great Britain.
30. Rumania forced by Axis to yield half Transylvania to Hungary.

SEPTEMBER 1940

Great air raids over Great Britain throughout the month.
6. Abdication of King Carol of Rumania, succeeded by his son.
8. Night Raids on London begin.
15. Smashing defeat of German air attack; 185 brought down. Italian troops cross Egyptian frontier and occupy Sollum.
20. Italians form entrenched camp at Sidi Barrani.
24. General de Gaulle withdraws from Dakar.
28. Japan signs pact with Axis Powers.

OCTOBER 1940

4. Hitler and Mussolini meet at the Brenner Pass.
17. Opening of the Burma Road.
25. Hitler had meeting with General Franco on Spanish frontier.
28. Italy sent ultimatum to Greece, demanding free passage for troops and holding of strategic places.

NOVEMBER 1940

4. British troops land on Greek territory.
5 President Roosevelt elected for Third Term.
6. Gallabat reoccupied.
10. Death of Mr. Neville Chamberlain.
11. Italian Fleet in Taranto Harbour receives severe damage from Fleet Air Arm. Three battleships crippled.
13. Greece forces Italians back over the Kalamas River.
14. German night bombers start intensive air raids on provincial cities; the attack on Coventry.
20. Koritza, Italian base in Albania, captured by the Greeks.

DECEMBER 1940

1. Fall of Pogradets in Albania.
4. Port of Santi Quaranta abandoned by Italians.
7. Argyrokastro entered by Greeks. Marshal Badoglio resigns command of Italian Army.
9. British Forces attack Italians and reach coast at Buk-Buk.
11. Capture of Sidi Barrani and 20,000 prisoners.

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In Quest of Good Hotels

By ASHLEY COURTENAY

WHAT is the worst feature of our British hotels? The gourmet will tell you it is the food, the wine connoisseur will decry on the inadequate wine list. But from almost daily experience it is, to my mind, one's reception.

Now, reception falls under different categories. One may have arrived just for a meal or a drink, call to enquire about rooms, or be the expected arrival.

How rarely is a reception friendly! How often one receives a forbidding look instead of a smile—how quite often there is no one to receive one at all!

Though some hotels, especially the small inns, often radiate the spirit of hospitality, there are numerous cases where it is the reverse.

Three times under three different managements have I called in at a roadside hotel on the Oxford road, intending to stop for a meal. And three times have I walked out, because on two occasions the then proprietor was too engaged in playing darts to pay any attention to the stranger within his gates, and the third time because I could not make anyone hear at all. So I pinned a note in the bar—"We 've been and gone, and are never coming back."

How different it was the other day at a once old posting house at Wells. The hall porter was quick to put one at one's ease. There was a Dickensian touch about the way he taught us the geography of the house, advised the head waiter there were two chances for lunch (chance is the hotel trade term for those not staying in the house): Whilst we could not have been waited on better in the dining room if we had been royalty itself.

And this reminds me of the reverse picture. I remember one day standing about rather foolishly in the entrance hall of a so-called hotel on the Norfolk Broads. After much bell-ringing a hostile-looking female put in an appearance—"Anything you want?" she snapped at us. Meekly we asked whether we could have some lunch. "Dining room, second on the right." And then she shouted out to a decrepit grease-tail-coated waiter, "Hi, Charles, two odd lunches!" And odd lunches they were!

But I am digressing from my main theme—the reception proper. That is, that often foreboding creature dressed in black who presides behind a glass window.

If only hotel-keepers realised the vital importance of first impressions they would institute a Training School for Receptionists, where they would learn tact, patience, and everything, in fact, that goes to make up the gentle art of being pleasant.

In these war days in particular when hotels are fewer and fuller, when the public have difficulty in finding accommodation at all, it is important that the hotelier should realise that the present good trade does not make for goodwill unless he ensures that there is graciousness behind one's enquiries, a friendliness when one arrives, and a readiness to render help when one is settled in.

I know it must be very irritating for receptionists to be interrupted in the multitudinous duties of bookkeeping, typing, telephoning, and so on, to have to listen to the boring small talk of visitors, who for lack of anything else to do seem to take enjoyment in wasting the receptionist's time. But the fact still remains that a pleasing demeanour and a placid temperament can make or mar the hotel at which they are employed.

In the rôle of the expected visitor, the receptionist often forgets that we have had a cold and long journey. Their first greeting is more of a command—"Sign, please"! And in nine times out of ten one is presented with a spiky, corroded nib which may be splendid for bookkeeping but hopeless for our cold-handed signature!

First impressions again. It is such a small thing for hotel-keepers to make sure that there is a choice of clean nibs, broad or thin, clean blotting paper, an adequate space in which to fill up the requisite forms. Out of the ten marks I award to my reception at hotels, four go to the pleasantry of one's first arrival, two for clean nibs, a choice of nibs, and clean blotting paper, and four for the manner in which I am shown to my room and to the extent in which information is volunteered or supplied. On this latter point there is a host of difference in being shown to one's room or almost thrown into it. A few pleasant remarks going upstairs help to break the ice.

One likes to know without being told the situation of the bathroom in relation to one's room. How or where the electric meters are turned on, and the time of meals. And when one gets downstairs and begins one's hotel life, one senses efficiency if the hall porter *asks* what papers you would like ordered for you, what time you would like to be called in the morning, Indian or China tea. And the final touch of reception is when the head waiter *awaits* your first arrival and escorts you to your table so that you can avoid the embarrassment of having to stand about, the cynosure of every eye.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

W. O. M., Chelsea.—There is more chance of your sleeping in bed if you were to knock off work earlier each afternoon and live outside the centre of London. There may be room for you at the Red House, Leatherhead. Certainly you would be comfortable there.

L. M., Marlow.—Personally, in your case, I should select the Queen's Hotel, Penzance, for Christmas. They have had their aerial visitations, but they are not likely to be frequent. You will appreciate the sunny position of the Queen's, overlooking the sea.

Mr. Ashley Courtenay is always pleased to advise "Sphere" readers of hotels, both large and small, known to him personally. Letters, accompanied by a 2½d. stamp for reply, should be addressed to him, c/o the Editor, THE SPHERE, *32-34, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.4. Personal and telephone inquiries, however, cannot be accepted.*

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